

Isaiah 49:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.

Analysis

But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. This verse voices the deep despair of God's people in exile, providing a stark counterpoint to the cosmic praise of verse 13. "Zion" personifies Jerusalem and by extension the covenant community. The dual complaint—forsaken ('azab, אָזַב) and forgotten (shakach, שָׁכַח)—intensifies the sense of divine abandonment. The repetition of divine titles ("LORD" = YHWH; "Lord" = Adonai) underscores the theological crisis: has the covenant God truly abandoned His promises?

This honest expression of doubt reflects a recurring biblical pattern where faith wrestles with apparent divine absence (Psalms 13, 22, 77). From a Reformed perspective, God allows His people to voice their struggles without condemnation—the lament psalms demonstrate that honest questioning before God is legitimate worship. Yet this perceived abandonment contradicts divine reality; God's subsequent response (verses 15-16) emphatically denies the charge.

Theologically, this verse addresses the problem of evil and suffering for God's people. The exile seemed to contradict God's covenant promises, yet Isaiah teaches that divine purposes transcend immediate circumstances. Christ Himself experienced the ultimate forsakenness on the cross ("My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46), bearing the judgment that allows God never truly to forsake His elect (Romans 8:38-39).

Historical Context

This complaint reflects Israel's experience during the Babylonian exile (586-538 BCE). The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple—God's dwelling place—created a profound theological crisis. If the temple was destroyed and the people exiled, had God abandoned His covenant? The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel addressed similar concerns during this period.

Ancient Near Eastern theology typically viewed military defeat as evidence that a nation's god was weaker than the conqueror's deity. Israel faced this challenge: did Babylon's victory mean Marduk was stronger than Yahweh? Isaiah's response affirms that exile resulted from divine judgment for covenant violation, not divine weakness. More importantly, God had not forgotten His people; their restoration was assured by His unchanging character and covenant faithfulness.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when circumstances seem to contradict God's promises?
2. What biblical truths anchor your faith when God feels distant or absent?
3. How does Christ's experience of forsakenness on the cross minister to your fears of abandonment?

Interlinear Text

אָמַר	צִיּוֹן	עָזַב נִי	יְהוָה	אֲדָנִי	שָׁכַחְנִי:
said	But Zion	hath forsaken	The LORD	me and my Lord	hath forgotten
H559	H6726	H5800	H3068	H136	H7911

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 40:27 (References Lord): Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

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