

# Isaiah 49:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

## Analysis

This is one of Scripture's most tender expressions of God's unfailing love, using maternal imagery to convey covenant faithfulness. God poses a hypothetical: 'Can a woman forget her sucking child?' The nursing relationship represents the strongest natural bond—a mother's hormonal, emotional, and physical connection to her infant. The Hebrew shakach (שָׁכַח, forget) means to completely cease remembering, to abandon from mind. 'That she should not have compassion' uses racham (רָחֶם), from the word for womb—suggesting the deep, visceral love mothers feel. God acknowledges the unthinkable possibility: 'Yea, they may forget'—even the strongest human love can fail. Tragically, some mothers do abandon children. But the divine contrast follows: 'Yet will I not forget thee' (ve-anokhi lo eshkachekh, וְאַנְחִי לֹא אֲשַׁקְּחֶה). The emphatic pronoun 'I' (anokhi) stresses God's personal commitment. His covenant love surpasses the strongest human affection, proving absolutely unbreakable.

## Historical Context

Israel in Babylonian exile felt forgotten by God—temple destroyed, city razed, people scattered, promises seemingly void. Isaiah addresses this despair: 'Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me' (49:14). This verse responds to that accusation. The maternal imagery would resonate deeply in ancient culture where motherhood defined women's identity and security. While ancient Near Eastern religions included mother goddesses (Ishtar, Asherah),

Israel's God transcends gender while using both maternal and paternal imagery. The New Testament affirms God's unfailing remembrance: nothing separates believers from God's love (Romans 8:38-39). Jesus promises never to lose those the Father gave Him (John 6:39).

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. When you feel forgotten by God, how can this promise of His unfailing remembrance provide comfort?
2. How does God's love surpassing even maternal affection change your understanding of His commitment to you?

## Interlinear Text

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אֲשַׁפְחָה:	אָשָׁפָחָה	אָשָׁפָחָה	עַוְלָה	מְרַחַם
<b>forget</b>	<b>Can a woman</b>	<b>her sucking child</b>	<b>that she should not have compassion</b>	
H7911	H802	H5764		H7355
בָּן	בָּטָן הָ	בָּטָן הָ	אַלְהָ	אֲשַׁפְחָה:
<b>on the son</b>	<b>of her womb</b>	<b>H1571</b>	<b>H428</b>	<b>forget</b>
H1121	H990			H595
				H3808
				<b>forget</b>
				H7911

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 44:21** (Parallel theme): Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

**Psalms 103:13** (Parallel theme): Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

**Matthew 7:11** (Parallel theme): If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

**Jeremiah 31:20** (Parallel theme): Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.

**Hosea 11:1** (Parallel theme): When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

**Malachi 3:17** (Parallel theme): And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

**Lamentations 4:10** (Parallel theme): The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.