

Isaiah 63:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

Analysis

'O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.' The bold question attributes their wandering to God - 'why hast thou made us to err?' This doesn't deny human responsibility but acknowledges divine sovereignty even over sin's effects. The prayer is for God to 'return.'

Historical Context

This echoes the hardening theme of Isaiah 6:10 and anticipates Romans 9-11. The relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility remains mysterious yet real.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do you understand the relationship between God's sovereignty and human sin?
2. What does it mean to pray for God to 'return'?

Interlinear Text

תָּקַשׁ יְם מִדְכָּךְ יְבָרֵךְ לְפָה תָּתַעַנוּ יְהוָה
why hast thou made us to err and hardened from thy ways O LORD
H4100 H8582 H3068 H1870 H7188

שְׁבָטִים לְבָבֵנוּ שְׁבָטִים לְמִזְרָאתֵנוּ שְׁבָטִים לְמִזְרָאתֵנוּ
sake the tribes from thy fear Return for thy servants our heart
H7626 H5650 H4616 H7725 H3374 H3820

נָכְלָתֶךָ:
of thine inheritance
H5159

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 6:10 (Parallel theme): Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Joshua 11:20 (References Lord): For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Deuteronomy 2:30 (Creation): But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day.

Isaiah 29:13 (References Lord): Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have

removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Psalms 90:13 (References Lord): Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

John 12:40 (Parallel theme): He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

Numbers 10:36 (References Lord): And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel.

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