

Jeremiah 10:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.

Analysis

This verse warns against adopting pagan practices: 'Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen.' The Hebrew *derek haggoym* (דָּקָר הָגּוּם) means the path, conduct, or religious customs of the nations. 'And be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.' 'Signs of heaven' (*othoth hashamayim*, עֲתֹתָּה שָׁמָיִם) refers to celestial phenomena—eclipses, comets, planetary conjunctions—interpreted as omens. *chatat* (חָטָא, dismayed, terrified) describes pagan fear of cosmic signs. God's people should not share this fear because YHWH controls the heavens; the signs pagans dread are merely YHWH's creation.

Historical Context

Babylonian astrology was highly developed; astronomical records and omen texts fill cuneiform tablets. Eclipses, planetary movements, and unusual celestial phenomena were interpreted as messages from gods affecting empires and individuals. Exiled Judeans living in Babylon faced constant exposure to this sophisticated astral religion. The command to not 'learn' such practices addresses the temptation to adopt Babylonian religious worldview.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What contemporary forms of pagan 'ways' might believers be tempted to learn or adopt?
2. How does knowing God controls the heavens free us from superstitious fear of signs and omens?

Interlinear Text

וְמִאֵת וְתַּחַם יְמֵן אֶל הַשָּׁמֶן יְמֵן יְמֵן תְּנַזֵּן כִּי יְמֵן תְּנַזֵּן יְמֵן תְּנַזֵּן

מִצְרַיִם: בְּגָיאָה: מִצְרָיִם: בְּגָיאָה:
for the heathen at them H1471 H1992

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 20:23 (Parallel theme): And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.

Leviticus 18:3 (Parallel theme): After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their ordinances.

Ezekiel 20:32 (Parallel theme): And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone.

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