

Jeremiah 18:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?

Analysis

God employs nature imagery to highlight Israel's unnatural behavior: "Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field?" Mount Lebanon's snow-capped peaks provided reliable, refreshing water sources. "Shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?" The rhetorical questions expect negative answers—no one abandons reliable, life-giving water sources.

The implied comparison: just as travelers depend on Lebanon's cold streams, Israel should cling to God, their reliable source of life and blessing. But they've done the unthinkable—forsaken the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns (Jer 2:13). Nature operates according to consistent patterns, but humans irrationally abandon what benefits them for what destroys them. Sin is fundamentally irrational—it contradicts both revelation and reason.

This verse illustrates common grace—even fallen creation displays more consistency and wisdom than rebellious humans. Animals follow their instincts (Isa 1:3), rivers flow to the sea, snow caps mountains—nature obeys its ordained patterns. But humans, made in God's image with moral consciousness and revelation, irrationally rebel against their Creator and true good. Only supernatural grace can restore this fundamental irrationality.

Historical Context

Mount Lebanon's snow and springs were proverbial for reliability and refreshment in ancient Near Eastern culture (Jer 18:14, Song 4:15). The mountain range, located in modern Lebanon, reaches over 10,000 feet and maintains snow year-round, feeding numerous streams and springs. Ancient peoples depended on these predictable water sources. The prophets used this imagery to contrast God's faithful provision with Israel's unfaithful abandonment.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What 'cold flowing waters' has God provided that you're tempted to forsake for lesser things?
2. How does sin's fundamental irrationality manifest in your life—choosing what harms over what helps?
3. In what ways does nature's consistency rebuke human inconsistency and unfaithfulness?

Interlinear Text

הֲיַעֲזֹב	מֵצֵר	שֶׁדֶּי	שֶׁלֶג	לְבָנוֹן		
Will a man leave	which cometh from the rock	of the field	the snow	of Lebanon		
H5800	H6697	H7704	H7950	H3844		
אִם	יִנְתָּשׁ ו	מֵי	זָר	יִם	קָרִיִם	נוֹזְלִים:
H518	be forsaken	waters	that come from another place	or shall the cold	flowing	
	H5428	H4325	H2114	H7119	H5140	

Additional Cross-References

John 6:68 (Parallel theme): Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.