

Jeremiah 2:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing.

Analysis

God challenges Israel to investigate other nations' religious practices: "For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing." This rhetorical challenge invites comparison with both western ("isles of Chittim"—Cyprus and Mediterranean regions) and eastern ("Kedar"—Arabian desert tribes) cultures. The verbs emphasize thoroughness: "pass over and see," "send and consider diligently," "see if there be such a thing." God invites Israel to examine whether pagan nations abandon their gods like Israel abandoned Yahweh. The implied answer is no—even pagans remain more loyal to false gods than Israel to the true God. This comparison shames Israel by pointing out that idolaters show more consistency than God's covenant people. The irony is devastating: those worshipping nonexistent deities demonstrate greater religious fidelity than those who experienced the living God's redemption and provision.

Historical Context

Chittim (Kittim) originally referred to Cyprus but extended to designate Mediterranean coastal regions and islands—representing western civilizations including Greeks. Kedar was an Arabian tribe descended from Ishmael (Genesis 25:13), representing eastern desert peoples—nomadic cultures worshipping various deities. Jeremiah invites comparison between Israel and these pagan cultures spanning the known world from Mediterranean west to Arabian east. Historical evidence shows that ancient pagans maintained religious traditions with

remarkable consistency—Egyptian worship of Osiris, Mesopotamian devotion to various city gods, Greek Olympic pantheon, Arabian tribal deities. While these religions evolved, people didn't typically abandon their ancestral gods for foreign deities. Israel's unique position as recipients of direct divine revelation and covenant relationship with Yahweh made their apostasy even more inexcusable. They had traded the incomparable for the worthless, while pagans who had never known truth at least remained consistent with their error.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does it reveal about human sinfulness that God's covenant people proved less faithful than pagans to false gods?
2. How might modern believers exhibit similar inconsistency—knowing truth yet pursuing worthless alternatives—that even unbelievers might find hypocritical?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	עָבַר וְ	אֵי	כִּתְיִים	וְרָא וְ	וְקֵדָר	שְׁלַח וְ
H3588	For pass over	the isles	of Chittim	and see	unto Kedar	and send
	H5674	H339	H3794	H7200	H6938	H7971
וְהִתְבּוֹנֵן וְ	מֵאָד	וְרָא וְ	הֵן	הִיטָה	כְּזֹאת:	
and consider	diligently	and see	H2005	H1961	H2063	
H995	H3966	H7200				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 120:5 (Parallel theme): Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!

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