

Jeremiah 2:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Analysis

God identifies Israel's double sin with powerful water imagery—forsaking Him as the fountain of living waters and hewing out broken cisterns that hold no water. This crystallizes all idolatry: abandoning the sufficient source for insufficient substitutes.

Historical Context

This verse from Jeremiah 2 continues God's covenant lawsuit against Judah, delivered during the late 7th century BC as the nation spiraled toward Babylonian exile. The prophetic indictment addresses systematic idolatry, failed political alliances, and spiritual adultery that characterized Judah from Manasseh through Jehoiakim's reigns. Archaeological evidence confirms widespread syncretistic worship practices condemned here.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does this accusation against ancient Israel reveal patterns of spiritual unfaithfulness that might appear in different forms today?
2. What does God's persistent lawsuit demonstrate about His desire for His people's return versus immediate judgment?

Interlinear Text

אֶת־י	עַמִּי	י	עָשָׂה	הָ	רָע	וְ	שְׁתֵּי	יָם	כִּי
H853	For my people	H5971	have committed	H6213	evils	H7451	two	H8147	H3588
לָחַצַּב	בְּ	חַיִּים	הַמַּיִם:	מִקֵּן	וְ	עָזְבוּ	וְ		
and hewed them out	H2672	of living	H2416	no water	H4325	me the fountain	H4726	they have forsaken	H5800
הַמַּיִם:	יָכֹל	לֹ	לֹא	אֲשֶׁר	רָ	נִשְׁבְּרוּ	יָם	בְּאֵרֹת	בְּאֵרֹת
no water	H4325	that can hold	H3557	H3808	H834	broken	H7665	cisterns	H877
									H0

Additional Cross-References

John 4:14 (Parallel theme): But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

John 7:37 (Parallel theme): In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

Jeremiah 17:13 (Parallel theme): O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.

Psalms 36:9 (Parallel theme): For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

Revelation 21:6 (Parallel theme): And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Revelation 22:1 (Parallel theme): And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Isaiah 55:2 (Parallel theme): Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

Revelation 22:17 (Parallel theme): And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Jeremiah 4:22 (Evil): For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

Jeremiah 2:11 (Parallel theme): Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.