

Jeremiah 2:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands;
and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high
hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the
harlot.

Analysis

Despite God breaking their yoke in the Exodus and their initial pledge of obedience, Israel worshipped at pagan high places and under sacred trees, playing the harlot in spiritual adultery.

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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

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

כִּי	יַעֲזֹלָם	שָׁבִי רַחֲמֵי	עָלֶיךָ	נִתְקַחְתִּי	מִחוּסְרוֹתַיִךְ
H3588	For of old time	I have broken	thy yoke	and burst	thy bands
	H5769	H7665	H5923	H5423	H4147
וַתֹּאמֶר יְיָ	לֹא	אֶעֱבֹד	כִּי	עָלֶיךָ	כָּל הַגִּבְעָה
and thou saidst	H3808	I will not transgress	H3588	H5921	H3605
H559		H5674			hill
					H1389
גְּבוּהָהּ	כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ	וְתַחֲתֵי	כָּל עֵץ	וְכָל רֶשֶׁת יָרֵחַ	אֶת הַיָּם
when upon every high	H8478	H3605	tree	and under every green	H859
H1364			H6086	H7488	
צֶעֶף הַיָּם	זֹנֶה:				
thou wanderest	playing the harlot				
H6808	H2181				

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 12:2 (Parallel theme): Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree:

Leviticus 26:13 (Parallel theme): I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.

Jeremiah 17:2 (Parallel theme): Whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills.

Isaiah 1:21 (Parallel theme): How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

Jeremiah 30:8 (Parallel theme): For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him:

Hosea 3:3 (Parallel theme): And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.

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