

Jeremiah 2:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Neither said they, Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?

Analysis

God continues His indictment by highlighting Israel's ingratitude: 'Neither said they, Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt?' This rhetorical accusation reveals Israel's failure to acknowledge God's past deliverance. The question 'Where is the LORD?' (ayeh YHWH, אַיִּהּ יְהוָה) represents the seeking posture they should have maintained but didn't. The reference to Egyptian exodus—God's foundational redemptive act for Israel—emphasizes the magnitude of their ingratitude. The verse continues describing God's care: 'that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt.' This accumulation of descriptive phrases emphasizes the wilderness's extreme harshness—deserts, pits, drought, deadly danger, uninhabitable territory. Yet God guided them through successfully. The phrase 'shadow of death' (tsalmaveth, צֶלְמָוֶת) appears in Psalm 23:4, connoting mortal danger and deepest darkness. God's faithfulness in such conditions magnifies Israel's subsequent abandonment—they forgot the One who saved and sustained them through impossible circumstances.

Historical Context

The Exodus from Egypt (traditionally dated c. 1446 BC or alternatively c. 1260 BC) constituted Israel's national birth and foundational covenant relationship with Yahweh. Archaeological evidence from the Sinai Peninsula confirms the extreme harshness described—minimal water sources, treacherous wadis (dry river beds with flash flood danger), sparse vegetation, high temperatures, and dangerous terrain. Ancient caravan routes through Sinai required detailed knowledge of water sources; Israel's forty-year survival in this environment required divine provision (manna, water from rocks, quail, their clothes not wearing out). Deuteronomy repeatedly commands Israel to remember Egypt and wilderness experiences as basis for covenant loyalty (Deuteronomy 8:2-16, 15:15, 16:12, 24:18). Yet by Jeremiah's time (seven centuries later), this foundational memory had faded. The generation comfortable in Canaan's prosperity no longer asked "Where is the LORD?" because they had substituted Canaanite fertility gods. Church history shows similar patterns—later generations forgetting foundational truths experienced by founders.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does failing to remember and recount God's past faithfulness contribute to present spiritual compromise and unfaithfulness?
2. In what ways might believers today forget to ask "Where is the LORD?" amid comfortable circumstances, neglecting their dependence on God's provision?

Interlinear Text

אֵל אֵין H3808	אָמַר וְ H559	אֵין הֵ H346	יְהוָה הֵ H3068	הַמַּעֲלֵה הֵ H5927	אֵת נוֹ H853
out of the land H776	Neither said H559	of Egypt H4714	they Where is the LORD H1980	that brought us up H4057	us through the wilderness H853
אֵת נוֹ H776	בְּמִדְבָּר רֵ H4057	הַמּוֹלֵךְ יוֹ H1980	אֵת נוֹ H853	בְּמִדְבָּר רֵ H4057	אֵת נוֹ H853
out of the land H776	of deserts H6160	and of pits H7745	out of the land H776	of drought H6723	of drought H6723
וְצִלְמָוֹת H6757	וְצִלְמָוֹת H6757	אֵת נוֹ H776	לֹא H3808	עָבַר H5674	בָּהּ H0
and of the shadow of death H6757	and of the shadow of death H6757	out of the land H776	passed through H5674	passed through H5674	passed through H5674
אֵין יֵשׁ H376	וְלֹא H3808	יֵשׁ בְּ H3427	אֵין מֵ H120	שָׁמָּה H8033	שָׁמָּה H8033
that no man H376	dwelt H3427	and where no man H120	dwelt H3427	and where no man H120	and where no man H120

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 32:10 (Parallel theme): He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

Hosea 13:4 (References Lord): Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.