

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, אֱלֹהִים) 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, תְּשַׁמֵּת) 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

Psalm 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

אַתָּה בְּמֹעֵל הַיְהוָה אֲמָרָ וְאֵלֶיךָ

H3808 Neither said H346 they Where is the LORD H3068 that brought us up

H559 H346 H3068 H5927

בְּמִדְבָּר רַא אַתָּה בְּמֹולֵךְ יְהוָה מִצְרָיִם בְּאֶרֶץ

out of the land of Egypt us through the wilderness

H776 H4714 H1980 H853 H4057

בְּאֶרֶץ בְּאֶרֶץ עָרָבָה וְשׂוֹפֶת בְּאֶרֶץ בְּאֶרֶץ

out of the land of deserts and of pits out of the land of drought

H776 H6160 H7745 H776 H6723

וְצִלְמָת וְתַּחַת בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא בְּאֶרֶץ עָבֵר בְּהָ

and of the shadow of death out of the land passed through

H6757 H776 H3808 H5674

שָׁמָן אֵיךְ בְּאֶרֶץ בְּאֶרֶץ אֵיךְ בְּאֶרֶץ

that no man dwelt and where no man

H376 H3808 H3427 H120 H8033

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.