

Jeremiah 23:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence:

Analysis

Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence לֹכֶן הָנָה וְנִשְׁתֵּה אֶתְכֶם נִשְׁא וְנִטְשֵׁתִי אֶתְכֶם וְאֶתְכָּבֵעַר אֲשֶׁר נִתְתַּחַי לְכֶם וְלְאֶבֶוּתֶיכֶם מִעַל) (lakhen hin'ni v'nashiti etkhem nasho v'natashti etkhem v'et-ha'ir asher natatti lakhem v'la'avoteikhem me'al panai). The emphatic (אָנֹכִי וְנִשְׁתֵּה anokhi v'nashiti, 'I, even I, will forget') uses the infinitive absolute (נִשְׁא nasho nashah) for emphasis—'utterly, completely forget.' The verbs pile up: forget (נִשְׁהָ, nashah), forsake (נִטְשֵׁה, natash), cast out (שָׁלַע) implied in context).

The threefold judgment mirrors the Trinity of divine rejection:

1. God will forget them—reversing His covenant remembrance (Exodus 2:24)
2. God will forsake them—withdrawing presence
3. God will cast them from His presence—exile from land and proximity.

The city 'that I gave you and your fathers' emphasizes gift being revoked—Jerusalem was grace, not entitlement. Being cast (מעל פָּנִים me'al panai, 'from my face/presence') is ultimate curse, reversal of Aaronic blessing ('The LORD make his face shine upon thee,' Numbers 6:25). To be forgotten by God is worse than death.

Historical Context

This prophecy found literal fulfillment in 586 BC when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and exiled Judah. God's presence departed the temple (Ezekiel 10), the city was forsaken, and people were cast from the land. The exile represented divine forgetting—ceasing to remember covenant promises in their favor. Only after 70 years would God 'remember' again (Jeremiah 29:10), demonstrating that even divine forgetting has limits bounded by grace.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What would it mean for God to 'utterly forget' you—ceasing to attend to your prayers or life?
2. How does understanding blessing as gift (not entitlement) change your relationship with God's provision?
3. In what ways might you already be experiencing exile 'from God's presence' without recognizing it?

Interlinear Text

אַתָּךְ	מִנְשָׁ	יִתְּהַנֵּן	וְלֹכֶד	נִשְׁאָה	
H3651	H2005	forget	H853	Therefore behold I even I will utterly	
		H5382		H5377	
וְלֹכֶד	וְלֹכֶד	וְלֹכֶד	וְלֹכֶד	וְלֹכֶד	
you and I will forsake	H853	you and the city	H834	that I gave	
H5203		H5892		H5414	
וְלֹכֶד	וְלֹכֶד	וְלֹכֶד	וְלֹכֶד	וְלֹכֶד	
you and your fathers	H1	and cast you out of my presence	H6440		
H0					

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 23:33 (Parallel theme): And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What is the burden of the LORD? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD.

Ezekiel 8:18 (Parallel theme): Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.