

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 (לִכֵּן הִנְנִי וְנָשִׁיתִי אֶתְכֶם בְּשָׁא וְנִטְשָׁתִי אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת־הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָכֶם וְלְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵעַל פָּנָי, 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 אֲנֹכִי וְנָשִׁיתִי (anokhi v'nashiti, 'I, even I, will forget') uses the infinitive absolute נָשָׂא נָשָׂא (nasho nashah) for emphasis—'utterly, completely forget.' The verbs pile up: forget (נָשָׂא, nashah), forsake (נָטַשׁ, natash), cast out (שָׁלַךְ 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 מֵעַל פָּנָי (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

לְכֹ	הִנֵּנִי	וְנָשׂ	אֶתְּךָ	וְנֹשׂ	אֶתְּךָ
H3651	H2005	forget	H853	Therefore behold I even I will utterly	H5377
		H5382			
וְנִטְשָׁתִי	וְאֶתְּךָ	וְאֶתְּךָ	וְהָעִיר	וְאֶתְּךָ	וְנָתַתִּי
you and I will forsake	H853	H853	you and the city	H834	that I gave
H5203			H5892		H5414
וְלֹאֲבוֹתֶיךָ	וְלֹאֲבוֹתֶיךָ	וְלֹאֲבוֹתֶיךָ	וְלֹאֲבוֹתֶיךָ	וְלֹאֲבוֹתֶיךָ	וְלֹאֲבוֹתֶיךָ
H0	you and your fathers	H5921	and cast you out of my presence		
	H1		H6440		

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.