

# Jeremiah 31:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

## Analysis

This verse completes the thought from verse 35: only if the sun, moon, and stars cease their courses will Israel cease to be a nation before God. This is an impossibility—therefore Israel's continuation is certain. The phrase 'seed of Israel' refers to the covenant people, the descendants of Jacob. God promises their perpetual existence, regardless of human unfaithfulness or historical catastrophes.

This raises important theological questions about Israel's continuing role in God's purposes. Reformed theology has wrestled with how this relates to the church. Some see the church as the 'new Israel' that completely replaces ethnic Israel. Others see a continuing distinction, with God's purposes for ethnic Israel distinct from but related to the church. Romans 9-11 addresses these questions, affirming that God's gifts and calling regarding Israel are irrevocable, yet also that Gentiles are grafted into the people of God.

The safest interpretation affirms both/and: the church (including both Jewish and Gentile believers) is the fulfillment of Israel's purpose as God's people, yet this does not negate God's continuing purposes for ethnic Israel. All true Israel is saved (Romans 11:26)—both the believing remnant from ethnic Israel and Gentiles brought in through faith. The permanence promised here ultimately applies to all who are in Christ, the true seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:29).

## Historical Context

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Throughout history, attempts have been made to destroy the Jewish people—from Pharaoh to Haman to Antiochus to Hitler. Yet they persist, against all odds. This survival testifies to God's covenant faithfulness. Even when most Jews rejected Jesus as Messiah, a remnant believed (Romans 11:5), and the gospel went to Gentiles. Yet Paul insists God has not rejected His people (Romans 11:1), and all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26).

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How should we understand God's irrevocable covenant with Israel in light of the church as God's people including Gentiles?
2. What does the Jewish people's continued existence throughout history reveal about God's covenant faithfulness?
3. How does understanding Israel's permanence inform our interpretation of biblical prophecy and eschatology?

## Interlinear Text

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גַם יְהִי הַנְּאָם לְפָנָי בְּאֶלְעָמָן יְמִינָם שָׁוֹא אָמָן  
H518 **depart** H4185 If those **ordinances** H2706 H428 **before** H6440 **me saith** H5002 **the LORD** H3068 H1571

לְפָנָי יְמִינָם שָׁוֹא אָמָן מִמְּנִי וְתִּשְׁבַּת וְתִּשְׁבַּא לְזִבְעָן  
then the **seed** of **Israel** also shall cease H2233 H3478 H7673 H1961 from being a nation H1471 before H6440

כָּל תְּמִימָן: כָּל  
H3605 **me for ever** H3117

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 148:6** (Parallel theme): He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

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