

Jeremiah 31:37

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

Analysis

If heaven above can be measured (אֶם-יִמְדוּ שָׁמַיִם מִלְמַעְלָה)—God stakes Israel's security on physical impossibilities. The verb madad (מָדַד, to measure) appears in creation contexts—God 'measured' the waters in His hand (Isaiah 40:12). The parallel structure intensifies: measuring the immeasurable heavens, searching out unsearchable **foundations of the earth** (מוֹסְדֵי-אֶרֶץ, mosedei-eretz).

I will also cast off all the seed of Israel—the zera' (seed, זֶרַע) recalls the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 13:16, 15:5). God essentially says: 'My covenant with Abraham's offspring is as unbreakable as creation's structure.' This answers Israel's despairing question in exile: 'Has God abandoned us?' The New Covenant (vv. 31-34) doesn't replace but fulfills God's irrevocable election (Romans 11:1-2, 28-29).

Historical Context

Written to exiles who felt God had abandoned them after Jerusalem's destruction (586 BC), this verse follows the New Covenant promise (vv. 31-36). Ancient Near Eastern suzerain treaties often included permanence clauses tied to cosmic order—Jeremiah invokes this form to guarantee Israel's survival despite judgment.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What current circumstances tempt you to believe God has abandoned His promises to you?
2. How does the immutability of physical creation reflect the unchangeability of God's covenantal character?
3. In what ways does this verse inform Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 about Israel's future?

Interlinear Text

כֹּה	אָמַר	יְהוָה:	אִם	יָמֵ דָוִד	שָׁמַיִם יִם	מֶלֶךְ עֲלֵה
H3541	Thus saith	the LORD	H518	can be measured	If heaven	above
	H559	H3068		H4058	H8064	H4605
וַיִּחְקֹר	וַיִּסְדֹּד	אֶרֶץ	לְמַטָּה	גַּם	אֲנִי	
searched out	and the foundations	of the earth	beneath	H1571	H589	
H2713	H4146	H776	H4295			
אֲמַאֲסֵה	בְּכָל	זֶרַע	יִשְׂרָאֵל	עַל	כָּל	אֲשֶׁר
I will also cast off	H3605	all the seed	of Israel	H5921	H3605	H834
H3988		H2233	H3478			
עָשׂוּ	נֹאֵם	יְהוָה:				
for all that they have done	saith	the LORD				
H6213	H5002	H3068				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 40:12 (Parallel theme): Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Jeremiah 33:22 (Parallel theme): As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.

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