

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 (אָמַר יְהוָה שָׁמָיִם מִלְמַעַלָּה)—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** (חוֹסְדֵי-אֶרֶץ, mosedei-eretz).

I will also cast off all the seed of Israel—the zera' (seed, זֶרֶע) 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

מִלְמָד עַלְהָ שְׁמָם יְמִין
H3541 Thus saith H518 the LORD H4058 can be measured H8064 If heaven H4605 above

אָנָּי גַּם לְמַטָּה אֶצְבָּע אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ
H2713 searched out H4146 and the foundations H776 of the earth H4295 beneath H1571 H589

אָשָׁר כֵּל עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל יְבָעֵב בְּכָל אֶחָד
H3988 I will also cast off H3605 all the seed H2233 of Israel H5921 H3605 H834

עָשָׂה יְהֹוָה נָאָמֵן
H6213 for all that they have done H5002 saith H3068 the LORD

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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