

Jeremiah 33:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season;

Analysis

Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season. This verse introduces a divine analogy that grounds God's covenant promises in the created order's stability. The reference to "covenant of the day" and "covenant of the night" invokes Genesis 8:22 and God's post-flood promise that "while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

The conditional construction "if ye can break" (im-tapheru) is rhetorical, emphasizing impossibility. The verb parar ("break/annul") is the same used for covenant violation, creating a deliberate parallel between natural law and covenantal promise. Just as humans cannot disrupt the astronomical cycles governing day and night, neither can God's covenant with David be nullified. This appeals to observable reality to confirm spiritual truth.

Theologically, this verse teaches:

1. God's covenant fidelity is anchored in His character as Creator and Sustainer of creation
2. the same divine power maintaining natural order guarantees covenant fulfillment
3. God's promises are more certain than physical laws;

4. creation itself testifies to God's faithfulness.

The Westminster Confession (7.1) affirms this connection between God's sovereign power over creation and His covenant reliability.

Historical Context

This prophecy came when the Davidic dynasty appeared finished. Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) had been taken to Babylon in 597 BCE, and Zedekiah, the last Davidic king, would soon be captured (586 BCE). To human observation, the covenant with David seemed as broken as the nation itself. Yet God appeals to creation's constancy to affirm covenant permanence.

The astronomical metaphor would resonate powerfully with an ancient Near Eastern audience familiar with Babylonian astral worship. While Babylon's gods were identified with celestial bodies, Yahweh is the Creator who established and maintains these bodies' movements. The same sovereign power that set the sun, moon, and stars in their courses guarantees the Davidic covenant. This assertion countered both pagan cosmologies and Israelite despair about covenant failure.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does observing nature's regularity strengthen your confidence in God's promises?
2. In what areas of your life do you struggle to believe God's promises are as certain as natural laws?
3. How does understanding God as both Creator and Covenant-keeper affect your worship?

Interlinear Text

בְּרִית־ אַתָּה בְּרִית־ אַתָּה בְּרִית־
H3541 Thus saith the LORD H518 If ye can break H853 and my covenant
H559 H3068 H6565 H1285

כִּי זֹה וְלֹבֶלֶת־ אַתָּה בְּרִית־ אַל יְלַה
of the day H853 and my covenant and night H1115 H1961
H3117 H1285 H3915

וְיֻמָּם אַל יְלַה בְּעֵתֶם אַל יְלַה
and that there should not be day and night in their season H3119 H3915 H6256

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 89:37 (Parallel theme): It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.

Genesis 8:22 (Parallel theme): While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

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