

Jeremiah 51:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things: and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the LORD of hosts is his name.

Analysis

The portion of Jacob is not like them—"portion" (חֵלֶק, cheleq, share, portion, inheritance) designates what belongs to someone. While pagans have worthless idols, Jacob's portion is the living God Himself. Psalm 16:5 declares: "The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance." This reverses typical religion: instead of God being what humans possess, God possesses His people, and they possess Him—mutual indwelling.

For he is the former of all things—the verb "formed" (יָצַר, yatsar, form, fashion) describes potter shaping clay (Jeremiah 18:1-6). God forms creation; idols are formed by craftsmen. The phrase "all things" (כָּל, hakol) encompasses universal creation—God made everything. **And Israel is the rod of his inheritance**—the term "rod" (שֵׁבֶט, shevet, rod, staff, tribe, scepter) can mean tribe or royal scepter. Israel is God's special possession, His treasured people. **The LORD of hosts is his name**—the covenant name YHWH plus title "of hosts" (תְּשֻׁבֹּת, tseva'ot) emphasizes both intimate relationship and sovereign power.

Historical Context

This theological affirmation grounds Israel's confidence during Babylonian exile. Surrounded by impressive idolatry and apparent Babylonian gods' superiority (Babylon conquered Judah!), exiles needed reminding that YHWH, not Marduk, is the true God. The verse's placement after mocking idols (vv. 17-18) provides

contrast: lifeless idols versus living God; human-crafted images versus divine Creator; temporary vanities versus eternal LORD. This sustained faith through exile until vindication came via Babylon's fall and Jewish return.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that God is your 'portion'—not merely what you have from God, but God Himself as your inheritance?
2. How does the contrast between idols (formed by humans) and God (former of all things) expose idolatry's fundamental irrationality?
3. In what ways does being 'the rod of His inheritance'—God's special possession—provide security when circumstances suggest God's weakness?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	כִּי לֹה	חֵלְקִי	יַעֲקֹב	כִּי	יֹצֵר
H3808	H428	The portion	of Jacob	H3588	is not like them for he is the former
		H2506	H3290		H3335
הַכֹּל	וְהוּא	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	הַמֶּדֶבֶר	וְנַחֲלָתוֹ	יְהוָה
H3605	H1931	of all things and Israel is the rod	of his inheritance	the LORD	
		H7626	H5159	H3068	
וְשֵׁמוֹ:	צָבָא				
	of hosts	is his name			
	H6635	H8034			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 73:26 (Parallel theme): My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Jeremiah 10:16 (References Lord): The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: The LORD of hosts is his name.

Psalms 33:12 (References Lord): Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

1 Peter 2:9 (Parallel theme): But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Isaiah 47:4 (References Lord): As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.