

Jeremiah 8:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD;
Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not
return?

Analysis

This verse transitions to a new oracle with 'Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD.' The rhetorical questions that follow expose the absurdity of Judah's spiritual trajectory. 'Shall they fall, and not arise?' uses qum (עַל), the Hebrew word for rising/resurrection. Normal behavior after falling is to get up. 'Shall he turn away, and not return?' uses shuv (שׁוּב), the key word for repentance throughout the prophets. When someone wanders off the path, natural response is to return. Yet Judah defied both common sense and natural instinct by remaining in their fallen state and refusing to return to God. The questions function as indictment: Judah's persistence in sin is unnatural, contrary to basic human wisdom.

Historical Context

This oracle likely dates to the reign of Jehoiakim (609-598 BC) when Judah had opportunity to repent following Josiah's death but instead reverted to idolatry and injustice. Jeremiah consistently called for repentance (shuv) using the same root appearing here. The rhetorical questions reflect ancient wisdom tradition—appealing to common experience and natural order to expose folly.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What makes persistent sin so irrational when viewed from the perspective of natural human behavior?
2. How does the imagery of falling and not rising convict us of our own tendencies to remain in spiritual failure rather than seeking restoration?

Interlinear Text

אָמַר	אָמַר	אָמַר	אָמַר	יְהִי
Moreover thou shalt say		Moreover thou shalt say		the LORD
H559	H413	H3541	H559	H3068
שַׁלֵּא	שַׁלֵּא	שַׁלֵּא	שַׁלֵּא	שַׁלֵּא
Shall they fall	H3808	and not arise	H518	and not return
H5307	H6965		H7725	H7725

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 24:16 (Resurrection): For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

Hosea 6:1 (References Lord): Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

Micah 7:8 (Resurrection): Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.

Isaiah 55:7 (References Lord): Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Isaiah 44:22 (Parallel theme): I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

Jeremiah 3:1 (References Lord): They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD.

Amos 5:2 (Resurrection): The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; there is none to raise her up.

Ezekiel 18:23 (References Lord): Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

1 Kings 8:38 (Parallel theme): What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house:

Hosea 14:1 (References Lord): O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.