

Jeremiah 9:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law
which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice,
neither walked therein;

Analysis

This verse provides divine answer: 'And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law.' The Hebrew *azvu* (עָזְבוּ, forsaken, abandoned) with *torati* (תּוֹרָתִי, my Torah/instruction) identifies the fundamental problem—covenant law abandoned. 'Which I set before them' (*natati liphneihem*) recalls Deuteronomy's presentation of the covenant at Moab. 'And have not obeyed my voice' (*shamu beqoli*) echoes the Shema's demand for obedient hearing. 'Neither walked therein' (*halku bah*) uses the Hebrew verb for lifestyle, conduct—they didn't live according to Torah. The three-fold description—forsaking, not obeying, not walking—comprehensively describes covenant violation.

Historical Context

This explanation would resonate with exiles familiar with Deuteronomy's covenant curses (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The Torah had been 'set before them'—publicly read at covenant renewal ceremonies (Joshua 24, 2 Kings 23). They couldn't claim ignorance. The 'voice' of God came through prophets who repeatedly called for repentance. Their failure was willful, not inadvertent.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do forsaking, not obeying, and not walking describe progressive stages of covenant unfaithfulness?
2. What does the emphasis on God's 'setting before them' His law suggest about human responsibility despite divine initiative?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה	עַל	עֲזָבָם	אֶת	תּוֹרַתִּי
saith	And the LORD	H5921	Because they have forsaken	H853	my law
H559	H3068		H5800		H8451
אֲשֶׁר	נָתַתִּי	לִפְנֵיהֶם	וְלֹא	שָׁמְעוּ	בְּקוֹלִי
H834	which I set	before	H3808	them and have not obeyed	my voice
	H5414	H6440		H8085	H6963
וְלֹא	הָלַכְתִּי				
H3808	neither walked				
	H1980				

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 7:19 (Word): But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them;

Jeremiah 22:9 (References Lord): Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.

Ezra 9:10 (Word): And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments,

