

Acts 7:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

Analysis

Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. Stephen continues quoting Amos, detailing specific idolatries that brought judgment—worship of Moloch and Remphan, leading to Babylonian exile.

Moloch worship involved child sacrifice—the most abhorrent idolatry imaginable (Leviticus 18:21, 2 Kings 23:10). The tabernacle of Moloch refers to portable shrines carried in idolatrous processions. Remphan (Saturn in some traditions) represents astral worship. These weren't ancient historical curiosities but serious covenant violations that provoked God's judgment.

Figures which ye made emphasizes idols as human creations—powerless yet enslaving. The irony: people create idols, then become enslaved to their creations. This reverses the proper order where Creator receives worship from His creation.

I will carry you away beyond Babylon prophesies exile—the covenant curse of Deuteronomy 28. Amos said 'beyond Damascus' (Amos 5:27); Stephen updates to beyond Babylon, referencing the actual historical fulfillment. Covenant unfaithfulness doesn't go unpunished; God's judgment, though patient, remains certain. This warns Stephen's audience: rejecting Messiah invites similar judgment.

Historical Context

Moloch worship plagued Israel intermittently, particularly during Ahaz and Manasseh's reigns (2 Kings 16:3, 21:6). The Babylonian exile (597-538 BCE) occurred after centuries of prophetic warnings. God's patience endured generations of apostasy before judgment fell.

Stephen speaks around 34-35 CE, roughly 600 years after the exile. Yet he warns of impending judgment—Jesus predicted Jerusalem's destruction (Luke 21:20-24), fulfilled in 70 CE when Romans destroyed the temple. Stephen becomes first martyr in this approaching crisis.

The parallel is deliberate: just as ancestral Israel's idolatry brought exile, so contemporary Israel's rejection of Messiah will bring Jerusalem's destruction. God's covenant includes both blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience—both are certain.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the progression from golden calf to child sacrifice illustrate sin's escalating destructive power?
2. What does Israel's exile teach about God's patience with sin having eventual limits?
3. In what ways do modern believers create 'figures' or systems that become objects of trust instead of God?
4. How should the certainty of divine judgment for covenant unfaithfulness shape Christian living?
5. What parallels exist between ancient Israel's exile and potential judgment facing apostate churches?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἀνελάβετε τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ Μολὸχ καὶ τὸ
Yea ye took up G3588 the tabernacle G3588 of Moloch Yea G3588
G2532 G353 G4633 G3434 G2532

ἄστρον τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῶν Ῥεμφὰν, τοὺς τύπους οὓς
the star G3588 god of your Remphan G3588 figures which
G798 G2316 G5216 G4481 G5179 G3739

ἐποιήσατε προσκυνεῖν αὐτοῖς καὶ μετοικιῶ ὑμᾶς
ye made to worship them Yea I will carry you
G4160 G4352 G846 G2532 G3351 G5209

ἐπέκεινα Βαβυλῶνος
beyond Babylon
G1900 G897

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 18:11 (Parallel theme): And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes:

2 Kings 21:6 (Creation): And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.