

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	Μολοχ	καὶ	τὸ
Yea	ye took up	G3588	the tabernacle	G3588	of Moloch	Yea	G3588
G2532	G353		G4633		G3434	G2532	
ἄστρον	τοῦ	θεοῦ	ὑμῶν	Ῥεμφάν,	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.