

Ezekiel 11:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.

Analysis

"But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD." God contrasts those receiving new hearts (verse 19) with those persisting in idolatry. The phrase "heart walketh after" indicates settled, chosen direction. Despite promised transformation, some refuse and persist in abominations. This demonstrates both human responsibility and divine sovereignty: God offers transformation but doesn't coerce acceptance. The Reformed tension between unconditional election and human responsibility appears—those who persist in rejection face just judgment.

Historical Context

Among the exiles (592 BC), some genuinely mourned sin while others clung to idols. God distinguishes between them: new hearts for repentant, judgment for rebellious. This pattern repeats: not all in covenant community prove genuine. External membership doesn't guarantee internal transformation. The early church faced this reality: some professed faith temporarily but fell away (1 John 2:19). The passage warns that stubborn persistence in idolatry despite clear warning brings inevitable judgment.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the contrast between new hearts and persistent idolatry demonstrate human responsibility?
2. What constitutes "walking after" idols versus merely struggling with temptation?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵל	לִבָּם	שְׁקֻצֵיהֶם	וְתוֹעֲבוֹתֵיהֶם
H413	But as for them whose heart	of their detestable things	and their abominations
	H3820	H8251	H8441
לִבָּם	הֵלֵךְ	דִּרְכָם	בְּרֹאשָׁם
But as for them whose heart	walketh	their way	upon their own heads
H3820	H1980	H1870	H7218
נָתַתִּי	נָא	אֲדֹנָי	יְהוָה:
I will recompense	saith	the Lord	H3068
H5414	H5002	H136	

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 11:9 (References God): Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

Ezekiel 9:10 (Parallel theme): And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.

Jeremiah 1:16 (References God): And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.

Ezekiel 22:31 (References God): Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 11:18 (Parallel theme): And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.