

Ezekiel 11:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain.

Analysis

God indicts the leaders: 'Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain.' This accuses them of violence and bloodshed, likely referring to both judicial murders and oppression. The Hebrew *chalal* (חָלַל, 'slain') indicates those violently killed. The multiplication and filling language suggests systematic, widespread violence under these leaders' watch.

Prophets frequently condemned Israel's leaders for violence against the vulnerable (Isaiah 1:15-17, Micah 3:1-3, Jeremiah 22:3). The sixth commandment's prohibition against murder extends beyond personal killing to systemic injustice that causes death—oppression, corrupt justice, economic exploitation. These leaders may not have personally wielded swords, but their policies and judicial corruption led to deaths, making them guilty of murder before God.

From a Reformed perspective, this illustrates human sinfulness's corporate dimension. Sin corrupts not just individuals but social structures, creating systems of oppression and violence. God's justice addresses both personal and systemic evil. Leaders bear responsibility for the systems they create or perpetuate. This challenges believers to pursue justice not just in personal ethics but in advocating for just social structures.

Historical Context

Pre-exilic Judah witnessed significant social corruption. Prophets condemned false trials, bribery, exploitation of widows and orphans, and economic oppression (Isaiah 1:21-23, Amos 5:10-15, Micah 3:9-11). Archaeological evidence from this period shows increasing economic disparity, with elaborate upper-class housing contrasting with cramped lower-class dwellings. The wealthy and powerful exploited the vulnerable with legal impunity.

Some violence may have been directed against prophets and faithful Israelites who opposed the establishment. Jeremiah narrowly escaped execution multiple times (Jeremiah 26:7-16, 38:1-13). The 'blood of the prophets' metaphorically cries out against Jerusalem's leadership (Matthew 23:29-36). The twenty-five men of Ezekiel 11:1 represented or supported this violent, corrupt system, making them targets of divine judgment.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does God's concern for victims of systemic injustice challenge individualistic approaches to faith that ignore social ethics?
2. What responsibility do you bear for systems of oppression or injustice that benefit you even if you don't personally perpetrate violence?
3. In what ways does the sixth commandment extend beyond personal violence to include advocacy for just social structures?

Interlinear Text

הרְבִיתֶם	חַלְלֶם:	בְּעִיר	הַזֹּאת	וּמִלֵּאתֶם
Ye have multiplied	thereof with the slain	in this city	H2063	and ye have filled
H7235	H2491	H5892		H4390
חוצֹתֵי יָם	חַלְלֶם:			
the streets	thereof with the slain			
H2351	H2491			

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 7:23 (Parallel theme): Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence.

Isaiah 1:15 (Parallel theme): And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Ezekiel 22:27 (Parallel theme): Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.

Ezekiel 22:12 (Parallel theme): In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 22:9 (Parallel theme): In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness.