

Ezekiel 12:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries.

Analysis

God states judgment's ultimate purpose: 'And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries.' The recognition formula—'know that I am the LORD'—appears throughout Ezekiel. Even through judgment, God's purpose is that people acknowledge His unique deity, sovereignty, and covenant lordship.

Knowledge of God (yada et-Yahweh, יָדַע אֶת־יְהוָה) isn't merely intellectual assent but experiential, relational awareness. Exile would teach what blessing couldn't—that Yahweh alone is God, that His covenant demands cannot be flouted, and that worship of false gods leads to destruction. Sometimes people learn God's character through experiencing consequences of ignoring Him.

From a Reformed perspective, this verse illustrates that God's glory is the ultimate end of all things, including judgment. God vindicates His holy name through both salvation and judgment. Those who won't acknowledge Him through grace will acknowledge Him through justice (Philippians 2:9-11). Either way, God's purpose that every knee bow and every tongue confess His lordship will be accomplished. This God-centered theology recognizes God's self-glorification as the proper ordering of reality.

Historical Context

The recognition formula 'know that I am the LORD' echoes the covenant formula from Sinai: 'I am the LORD your God' (Exodus 20:2). It also recalls Moses' promise that God would make His name known through both blessing and judgment (Exodus 6:7, 7:5, 14:4, 18). Ezekiel uses this formula over seventy times, more than any other book, emphasizing that knowledge of Yahweh is Israel's fundamental calling and privilege.

Historical fulfillment shows exile did produce knowledge of God. Post-exilic Judaism became militantly monotheistic, abandoning the idolatry that plagued pre-exilic Israel. The Jews who returned from Babylon never again worship foreign gods as their ancestors had. The suffering of exile accomplished what centuries of prophetic warning couldn't—eradicating idolatry from Jewish faith. Judgment served pedagogical purpose, teaching through consequences.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does God's purpose that people know Him through judgment demonstrate His commitment to truth and reality?
2. What lessons have you learned about God's character through experiencing consequences rather than through blessing?
3. In what ways does understanding that judgment serves pedagogical purposes shape your response to discipline?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּדְעוּ	כִּי	אֲנִי	יְהוָה	בְּהַפִּיצִי	אוֹתָם
And they shall know	H3588	H589	that I am the LORD	when I shall scatter	H853
H3045			H3068	H6327	
בְּגוֹיֵם	וַיִּזְרֹתִי	אוֹתָם	בְּאַרְצוֹתֵי:		
them among the nations	and disperse	H853	them in the countries		
H1471	H2219		H776		

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 6:7 (References Lord): And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel 6:14 (References Lord): So will I stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate, yea, more desolate than the wilderness toward Diblath, in all their habitations: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel 12:16 (References Lord): But I will leave a few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel 12:20 (References Lord): And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.