

Ezekiel 12:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Analysis

Another oracle begins: 'And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying.' This formula introduces yet another prophetic message, continuing the pattern of multiple warnings. The accumulation demonstrates thorough testimony—God leaves no excuse, warning repeatedly through various images and angles. This persistence reveals both God's justice (comprehensive warning) and His patience (repeated opportunities for repentance).

The Hebrew formula *vayehi devar-Yahweh elai* (וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי, 'and the word of Yahweh came to me') is Ezekiel's characteristic way of introducing new oracles. Its repetition emphasizes that Ezekiel didn't invent messages but received and transmitted divine revelation. Each oracle stands as independent divine word, though contributing to cumulative message.

From a Reformed perspective, the multiplication of warnings demonstrates God's common grace extended even to those under covenant curse. He desires that the wicked turn from sin and live (Ezekiel 18:23, 32, 33:11, 2 Peter 3:9). Multiple warnings provide maximum opportunity for repentance, showing that when judgment finally comes, it's thoroughly warranted by persistent impenitence despite ample warning.

Historical Context

Prophetic literature typically contains collections of oracles delivered over extended periods, later compiled into books. Ezekiel's ministry spanned over

twenty years (593-571 BC based on dated oracles). The accumulation of messages demonstrates sustained prophetic witness over time. This pattern parallels other prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Minor Prophets—who ministered for decades, repeatedly warning their generations.

The repeated formula also serves literary function, clearly marking oracle boundaries and organizing the prophetic book. Ancient readers/hearers could recognize where one message ended and another began. This careful structuring distinguishes genuine prophetic literature from random sayings collections, demonstrating intentional composition and preservation of distinct divine messages.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the repetition of 'the word of the LORD came' emphasize Scripture's divine origin versus human invention?
2. What does God's pattern of multiple warnings before judgment teach about His justice and patience?
3. In what ways should the accumulation of biblical warnings shape our urgency about repentance and faith?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּהִי י'	דָּבַר	יְהוָה	אֵלַי	לֵאמֹר:
H1961	And the word	of the LORD	H413	came unto me saying
	H1697	H3068		H559