

Ezekiel 14:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?

Analysis

God addresses Four sore judgments in this verse. Comprehensive divine wrath, demonstrating that God sees hearts and motives, not just external religious practices. The scenario reveals the futility of seeking God while maintaining idolatry—true inquiry requires undivided allegiance. Attempting to consult God while harboring idols represents the divided heart God rejects.

The passage illustrates that religious externals without heart reality constitute hypocrisy God abhors. Mere consultation of prophets, attendance at worship, or performance of rituals means nothing if the heart remains idolatrous. God demands total allegiance, not partial commitment combined with idolatrous hedging. The call is to genuine repentance involving both turning from sin and turning to God.

From a Reformed perspective, this passage teaches the doctrine of regeneration's necessity. External religion without heart transformation cannot save. Only the Spirit's work creating new hearts produces genuine faith and repentance. Attempts to maintain both God and idols reveal unregenerate hearts needing divine recreation, not mere moral reformation.

Historical Context

The elders coming to Ezekiel (v. 1) represented Jerusalem's leadership or fellow exiles seeking prophetic guidance. However, God revealed their secret idolatry—they maintained household gods or idolatrous practices while outwardly seeking Yahweh. This duplicity characterized pre-exilic Israel and necessitated judgment. Comprehensive divine wrath within this context of widespread syncretism where people attempted to hedge spiritual bets by worshiping both Yahweh and other deities. Archaeological discoveries of household figurines and foreign cult objects in Israelite homes confirm this pattern. The practice violated the Shema's demand for exclusive love and loyalty to Yahweh (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does this passage expose the futility of religious practices divorced from heart reality?
2. What modern idols do people attempt to maintain while still seeking God's blessing?
3. In what ways does Four sore judgments illustrate the necessity of genuine conversion versus mere external religion?

Interlinear Text

אָמַר	כִּי	אָמַר	יְהוָה	אָדָן	כִּי	אָמַר	עַת	אָרָב
H3588	H3541	For thus saith	the Lord	GOD	H637	H3588	my four	
		H559	H136	H3069			H702	
שְׁפָט	בָּעָה	רַב	בָּעָה	וְרַע	בָּעָה	בָּעָה		
judgments	and the noisome	the sword	and the famine	beast	and the noisome			
H8201	H7451	H2719	H7458	H2416	H7451			
לְבָכָר	יְהֹוָשָׁלָם	שְׁלַח	חִתִּי	אֶל	לְבָכָר	יְהֹוָשָׁלָם		
and the pestilence	How much more when I send	H1698	H7971	H413	upon Jerusalem	to cut off		
					H3389	H3772		
מִתְּמַמָּה	אֶל	מִתְּמַמָּה						
from it man	and beast	H4480	H120	H929				

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 33:27 (Word): Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely they that are in the wastes shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that be in the forts and in the caves shall die of the pestilence.

Ezekiel 5:17 (Word): So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it.

Ezekiel 14:17 (Word): Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it:

Ezekiel 14:15 (Parallel theme): If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts:

Ezekiel 14:13 (Parallel theme): Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the

staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it:

Ezekiel 14:19 (Parallel theme): Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast:

Ezekiel 5:12 (Word): A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

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