

Ezekiel 14:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings: and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord GOD.

Analysis

God addresses Ye shall be comforted in this verse. Understanding judgment brings acceptance, 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. Understanding judgment brings acceptance 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

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

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 Ye shall be comforted illustrate the necessity of genuine conversion versus mere external religion?

Interlinear Text

וְנִחַם וּ	אֶתְכֶם	כִּי	תִּרְא וּ	אֶת	דְּרֹכָם	אֶת
And they shall comfort	H853	H3588	you when ye see	H853	their ways	H853
H5162			H7200		H1870	
עֲלֵילוֹתָם	וַיֵּדְעֶתָם	כִּי	לֹא	חֵנָּה	עֲשֵׂה יְתִי	
and their doings	and ye shall know	H3588	H3808	without cause	all that I have done	
H5949	H3045			H2600	H6213	
אֵת	כָּל	אֲשֶׁר	עֲשֵׂה יְתִי	בָּהּ	נֹאֵם	אֲדֹנָי
H853	H3605	H834	all that I have done	H0	in it saith	the Lord
			H6213		H5002	H136
						GOD
						H3069

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