

Ezekiel 14:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;

Analysis

"Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols." God refuses to answer prayers when idols occupy the heart. The phrase "idols in his heart" reveals that idolatry is internal before external. Coming to prophets while cherishing idols is hypocrisy. God will not bless. Instead of desired answers, idolaters receive judicial responses confirming their idolatrous choices. This warns that unrepentant sin blocks prayer. God demands exclusive devotion, not divided loyalty.

Historical Context

The elders consulting Ezekiel (590 BC) maintained external religiosity while harboring internal idolatry. They wanted prophetic guidance while refusing to abandon false gods. God exposed their hypocrisy and warned He would answer according to their idols—confirming their deluded choices. This pattern appears throughout Scripture: God hardens those who persistently reject truth (Romans

1:24-28). The principle guards against presuming on God's favor while maintaining pet sins. True prayer requires genuine repentance.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What idols occupy your heart while you maintain external religiosity?
2. How does God's threat to answer according to idols warn against praying while cherishing sin?

Interlinear Text

כֹּה	אֵלֵיהֶם	אָמַר	אֲלֵהֶם	וַיֹּדְבֵר	לָכֵן
H3541	H413	H559	H853	H1696	H3651
		unto them	Thus saith	Therefore speak	
מִבֵּית	אִישׁ	אִישׁ	יְהוָה	אֵלֵהֶם	אָמַר
H1004	H376	H376	H3069	H559	
of the house	Every man	Every man	GOD	unto them	Thus saith
			H136		
לִבּוֹ	אֵל	גִּלּוּלָיו:	אֶת	יִסְּדָהּ	אֲשֶׁר
H3820	H413	H1544	H853	H5927	H834
in his heart	his idols	that setteth up	of Israel		
			H3478		
אֵל	וַיָּבֹא	פָּנָיו	נִכְחַ	יֹשִׁים	עוֹנוֹ
H413	H935	H6440	H5227	H7760	H5771
	and cometh	his face	before	and putteth	of his iniquity
					H4383
כִּי	לֹא	יָעֲנֵנִי	יְהוָה	אֲנִי	הַנָּבִיא
H0	H0	H6030	H3068	H589	H5030
		will answer	I the LORD	to the prophet	
גִּלּוּלָיו:	בְּרַב				
H1544	H7230				
his idols	according to the multitude				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 66:4 (Parallel theme): I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

Ezekiel 14:7 (Prophecy): For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face,

and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself:

Isaiah 3:11 (Parallel theme): Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

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