

Ezekiel 16:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.

Analysis

And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD. This verse acknowledges international recognition of Israel glory while attributing all beauty entirely to God work. The nation reputation derived completely from divine grace, not inherent merit—a crucial truth they would soon forget.

Thy renown went forth among the heathen indicates Israel fame spread internationally. Other nations recognized Israel unique status, prosperity, and wisdom (1 Kings 4:34, 10:1-13). This fulfilled Abrahamic covenant promise that Israel would be blessing to nations (Genesis 12:2-3) and demonstrate God glory to the world.

For thy beauty: for it was perfect provides reason for the fame—incomparable beauty and excellence. Perfect indicates completeness, wholeness, lacking nothing. Yet this perfection is immediately qualified: through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee. The beauty is entirely derivative. God comeliness (glory, splendor, beauty) transferred to Israel makes them beautiful. Saith the Lord GOD adds divine authority to this interpretation.

From Reformed perspective, this demonstrates the doctrine of alien righteousness. Believers have no intrinsic beauty or merit; all our acceptability before God derives

from Christ righteousness imputed to us (2 Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:9). Any spiritual beauty we possess comes from Him who makes us beautiful through His glory.

Historical Context

During Solomon reign, Israel indeed achieved international renown. The Queen of Sheba traveled great distance to witness his wisdom and wealth (1 Kings 10). Other nations sought alliance and trade. Israel unique possession of divine revelation, law, and wisdom tradition gave them distinctive status among ancient Near Eastern peoples.

However, this renown was completely dependent on God covenant faithfulness, not Israelite intrinsic superiority. Deuteronomy repeatedly warned against pride (8:17-18, 9:4-6). God chose Israel not because they were greater or more righteous than others but according to His sovereign grace and covenant promise to Abraham.

Archaeological evidence confirms Israel prominence during united monarchy period. Hebrew became known trade language; Solomon administrative wisdom was recognized; the temple became architectural wonder. Yet this was brief golden age; subsequent division and apostasy led to decline.

The verse sets up tragic irony. Israel renown should have led to humble gratitude acknowledging God as source. Instead, it produced pride and idolatry, as subsequent verses describe. They forgot the beauty was God gift and imagined it was their own achievement.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does attribution of all beauty to God comeliness teach about the source of spiritual merit?
2. How does international renown become stumbling block when divorced from humble gratitude?
3. In what ways do believers today claim credit for spiritual blessings that are entirely God work?
4. What is the danger of forgetting that all we have comes from divine grace?
5. How does Christ perfect beauty (Song of Solomon 5:16) become ours through union with Him?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּצֵא	לְרֹא	שִׁמְךָ	בְּגֹויִם	בִּפְנֵי	כִּי
went forth	H0	And thy renown	among the heathen	for thy beauty	H3588
H3318		H8034	H1471	H3308	
כַּל יְלֵךְ	הַוְאָ	בְּבָדָרִי	אֲשֶׁר	שְׁמַתִּי	עַל יְהֹוָה
for it was perfect	H1931	through my comeliness	H834	which I had put	H5921
H3632		H1926		H7760	
נָא מִ	אָדָן	יְהֹוָה			
upon thee saith	the Lord	H3068			
H5002	H136				

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 10:24 (References God): And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

Lamentations 2:15 (Parallel theme): All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?

1 Corinthians 4:7 (Parallel theme): For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

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