

Ezekiel 16:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them,

Analysis

Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them, Israel not only pursued foreign gods but fabricated idols from covenant gifts God provided. This represents ultimate perversion—using divine blessings for direct rebellion against the Giver.

My gold and of my silver emphasizes divine ownership. All Israel possessed came from God covenant faithfulness, not their own achievement. The metals represent both literal wealth and metaphorical honor/status. Which I had given thee stresses the grace principle—everything is gift, nothing earned.

Madest to thyself images of men describes idol manufacture, likely phallic cult objects or male deity representations violating Second Commandment (Exodus 20:4). To thyself indicates selfish appropriation of divine gifts for personal idolatrous purposes. Didst commit whoredom with them uses sexual metaphor for spiritual adultery, possibly referencing literal cult prostitution practices.

From Reformed perspective, this demonstrates total depravity—tendency to corrupt every good gift toward evil. Common grace blessings become rebellion instruments when hearts remain unchanged. The verse also teaches stewardship accountability: God will judge how we use His gifts, whether for His glory or idolatrous self-service.

Historical Context

This pattern echoes the golden calf (Exodus 32)—using God delivered wealth to create idols. Hosea 2:8 similarly indicts: she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. Archaeological excavations in Israelite sites reveal metal idols, fertility figurines, and cult objects contradicting covenant monotheism.

Images of men may reference asherim (wooden phallic poles), male deity statues, or cult prostitution paraphernalia. Ancient Near Eastern fertility cults employed sexual imagery and ritual prostitution, practices explicitly condemned in Torah (Deuteronomy 23:17-18) yet repeatedly practiced in apostate Israel.

The allegory reflects historical reality: prosperity under Solomon led not to gratitude but complacency and idolatry. Subsequent kings used national wealth to build high places, import foreign cults, and establish idolatrous worship systems even within the Jerusalem temple itself.

For the exiles, this accusation explained judgment: they had violated covenant not from poverty or necessity but from abundance and ingratitude, making the offense more culpable and judgment more justified.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does using God gifts for idolatry demonstrate fundamental ingratitude?
2. What modern idols do people fashion from divine blessings?
3. In what ways does prosperity test faithfulness more severely than adversity?
4. How should stewardship consciousness prevent misuse of God gifts?

5. What does Christ perfect use of all power and resources for God glory teach us (John 17:4)?

Interlinear Text

וְתָקַח י	כָּל־י	תְּפָאֲרֶתְךָ	מִזְהָבִי	וּמִכֶּסֶּפִּי	אֲשֶׁר
Thou hast also taken	jewels	thy fair	of my gold	and of my silver	H834
H3947	H3627	H8597	H2091	H3701	
נָתַתִּי	לְךָ	וַתַּעֲשִׂי	לְךָ	צִלְמִי	זָכָר
which I had given	H0	thee and madest	H0	to thyself images	of men
H5414		H6213		H6754	H2145
וַתִּזְנֶי	בָּם:				
and didst commit whoredom	H0				
H2181					

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