

Ezekiel 16:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them.

Analysis

Thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them—The Hebrew shemen (שֶׁמֶן, oil) and qetoreth (קֶטֶרֶת, incense) were sacred items reserved exclusively for YHWH's worship (Exodus 30:22-33). Jerusalem's spiritual adultery reached its nadir by taking covenant gifts—**broidered garments** (רְקִמָּה, elaborate embroidered vestments)—and using them to adorn idols. This wasn't mere apostasy but covenant betrayal using the very symbols of God's provision.

The prophetic imagery intensifies: Jerusalem dressed her idol-lovers with garments God provided, burned incense meant for His altar, and offered His oil to false gods. Paul's warning against using 'liberty for an occasion to the flesh' (Galatians 5:13) echoes this principle—perverting divine gifts into instruments of rebellion.

Historical Context

During Manasseh's reign (697-642 BC) and the decades before Babylon's invasion, Jerusalem's temple precincts hosted Asherah poles, astral cult altars, and syncretistic worship. Archaeological evidence from Tel Arad and Lachish confirms oil and incense were central to both legitimate and illicit worship.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What gifts from God might you be using for purposes contrary to His glory and worship?
2. How does the misuse of sacred things (time, talents, resources meant for God) constitute spiritual adultery in the New Covenant?

Interlinear Text

וּתְקַח ' אֶת	בְּגָדֵי ' רִקְמֵת	וּתְכֹסֶּיִם וְשֶׁמֶןִּי
And tookest	garments	thy broidered and coveredst mine oil
H3947	H853 H899	H7553 H3680 H8081
וּקְטֹרֶתִי ' נָתַתִּי לִפְנֵיהֶם:		
and mine incense	them and thou hast set	before
H7004	H5414	H6440