

Ezekiel 16:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations,

Analysis

This verse presents Cause Jerusalem to know in Ezekiel's extended allegory of Jerusalem as God's bride. Confronting the city with its sins, illustrating God's grace in choosing, rescuing, and elevating Israel from nothing to covenant partnership. The imagery depicts the foundational gospel pattern—God's initiative in salvation, not human merit or initiative. Israel contributed nothing to her election; God chose, rescued, cleansed, and covenanted with her purely from grace.

The allegory's power lies in contrasting God's gracious actions with Israel's subsequent unfaithfulness (developed later in the chapter). This establishes that Israel's judgment isn't arbitrary but betrayal of extraordinary grace. God lavished love on her, making her betrayal through idolatry (spiritual adultery) particularly heinous. The metaphor of marriage communicates covenant intimacy and the personal nature of sin against God.

From a Reformed perspective, this passage illustrates the doctrines of election and sovereign grace. God chose Israel not because of her attractiveness or merit but purely from divine love (Deuteronomy 7:7-8). Similarly, believers' salvation originates entirely in God's gracious choice and initiative (Ephesians 1:4-5, 2:1-5), not human worthiness or decision. This humbles pride and grounds assurance in God's character rather than our performance.

Historical Context

The chapter 16 allegory addresses Jerusalem's history from Canaanite origins (v. 3 —'thy father was an Amorite, thy mother a Hittite') through David's conquest, Solomon's glory, and eventual spiritual prostitution through idolatry and alliances with pagan nations. Confronting the city with its sins within this historical retrospective explaining how a nation so blessed fell so far. The imagery would resonate with Ezekiel's audience, conveying both the magnitude of God's grace and the enormity of Jerusalem's ingratitude. Archaeological evidence confirms Jerusalem's Canaanite origins (the Jebusites) before David's conquest, supporting the allegory's historical foundation.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Cause Jerusalem to know illustrate God's initiative in salvation versus human contribution?
2. What does this allegory teach about the seriousness of spiritual unfaithfulness after experiencing God's grace?
3. In what ways does understanding salvation's origin in divine grace shape Christian humility and assurance?

Interlinear Text

בֶּן	אָדָם	הוֹדָע	אֶת	יְרוּשָׁלַיִם	אֶת	תּוֹעֲבֹתֶיהָ:
Son	of man	to know	H853	cause Jerusalem	H853	her abominations
H1121	H120	H3045		H3389		H8441

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 22:2 (Parallel theme): Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city? yea, thou shalt shew her all her abominations.

Ezekiel 20:4 (Parallel theme): Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge them? cause them to know the abominations of their fathers:

Isaiah 58:1 (Parallel theme): Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

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