

Ezekiel 16:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.

Analysis

And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary. The Hebrew *hephek* (הֶפֶק, "contrary") means perversion or reversal—Jerusalem's behavior **inverted normal patterns of sin**. The phrase "none followeth thee" means no one pursued her; she pursued them. "Thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee" underscores the economic inversion: she paid instead of being paid.

This repetition emphasizes the shocking uniqueness of Jerusalem's sin. **Her idolatry surpassed ordinary unfaithfulness** in its aggressive pursuit of lovers and willingness to pay for rejection. The theological point cuts deep: when God's people abandon Him, they sink below common sinners in degradation. Those who possess divine revelation but spurn it become more corrupt than pagans who never knew truth (Romans 2:17-24, Luke 12:47-48).

Paul makes this principle explicit: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (1 Corinthians 3:18). Jerusalem's "wisdom" in political alliances proved ultimate folly. The church faces identical temptation—using worldly methods to achieve spiritual goals, seeking culture's approval through doctrinal compromise, or marketing Christ to make

Him palatable. Such inverted strategies reveal deeper unfaithfulness than honest paganism.

Historical Context

This verse concludes the prostitution allegory (vv. 23-34) before announcing judgment (vv. 35-43). Ezekiel's original audience—exiles in Babylon—needed this stark assessment to understand why God permitted catastrophic defeat. They viewed themselves as unfortunate victims of geopolitics; God exposed them as uniquely depraved covenant-breakers.

The "contrary" nature of their sin explains why judgment was so severe. Nations without revelation face judgment for violating natural law (Romans 1:18-32), but Israel possessed Scripture, prophets, temple, priesthood, and Davidic covenant. Greater privilege brings greater accountability (Amos 3:2). Jerusalem's aggressive pursuit of idolatry despite incomparable advantages made her sin unprecedented. The exiles needed this diagnosis to pursue genuine repentance rather than self-pity.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does privilege in knowing Scripture increase rather than decrease your accountability before God?
2. In what ways might you be 'contrary'—inverting spiritual priorities or using divine gifts for worldly approval?

Interlinear Text

וְתָהּ י' unto thee therefore thou art H1961	בְּ ה' H0	לְהִפָּרֹק: And the contrary H2016	מִן H4480
הַנָּשִׁים is in thee from other women H802	בְּתִזְנוֹתַי י' in thy whoredoms H8457	וְאַחַד י' whereas none followeth H310	לֹא H3808
זֹנֶה ה' thee to commit whoredoms H2181	נָתַן and in that thou givest H5414	וְאָתָּה a reward H868	וְאָתָּה a reward H868
נָתַן and in that thou givest H5414	לְ ה' H0	וְתָהּ י' unto thee therefore thou art H1961	לְהִפָּרֹק: And the contrary H2016