

Ezekiel 16:37

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness.

Analysis

Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. The divine verdict employs poetic justice: Jerusalem's lovers become her executioners. "I will gather" (qabats, יָבַץ) indicates God's sovereign action orchestrating judgment through historical forces—Babylon, Edom, Ammon, and other nations Jerusalem courted.

"All them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated" encompasses every foreign alliance, whether friendly or hostile. Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon—nations Jerusalem alternately allied with and opposed—would unite against her. The phrase **"discover thy nakedness unto them"** reverses the marriage metaphor: instead of intimate union, Jerusalem experiences public shaming. What she willingly exposed in prostitution would be forcibly exposed in conquest.

This principle of poetic justice appears throughout Scripture: Pharaoh drowned in the sea he used to kill Hebrew infants (Exodus 14:28), Haman hanged on the

gallows he built for Mordecai (Esther 7:10), and Babylon was conquered by nations she oppressed (Jeremiah 50-51). **God often uses the instruments of our sin to execute judgment.** The nations Jerusalem trusted for security would become agents of her destruction, demonstrating the bankruptcy of trusting creatures over Creator (Jeremiah 17:5-8).

Historical Context

This prophecy was fulfilled in 586 BC when Nebuchadnezzar's coalition besieged Jerusalem. Edomites, Ammonites, and others joined Babylon in plundering the city (Psalm 137:7, Lamentations 4:21-22, Obadiah 10-14). These were nations Judah had variously allied with and opposed throughout her history.

The siege lasted 18 months, resulting in catastrophic famine, cannibalism (Lamentations 2:20, 4:10), temple destruction, and mass deportation. The public humiliation of King Zedekiah—forced to watch his sons' execution before being blinded and led in chains to Babylon (2 Kings 25:7)—symbolized national shame. Jerusalem's nakedness was literally exposed as walls were broken down, treasuries looted, and survivors paraded as captives. The political alliances she relied upon proved worthless; Egypt's attempted relief failed (Jeremiah 37:5-10).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What relationships or resources do you trust for security instead of God, and how might they become instruments of His discipline?

2. How does the principle of poetic justice (sin's consequences using sin's instruments) reveal God's wisdom in judgment?

Interlinear Text

אֲשֶׁר אֶבְכַּתִּי חַנְכֵּן לְכִי
 H3651 H2005 Behold therefore I will gather H853 H3605 all thy lovers H834
 H6908 H157

אֶבְכַּתִּי עַל בְּתֵךְ
 with whom thou hast taken pleasure H5921 H853 H3605 H834 all thy lovers H157
 H6149

אֶשֶּׁר כֹּל עַל שְׁגַג אֶת
 with all them that thou hast hated H8130 Behold therefore I will gather H6908
 H5921 H3605 H834 H6908

עַל וְךָ אֶת מִסְבֵּב יְבָשָׂת אֶת
 them round about against thee and will discover all thy nakedness H6172
 H853 H5921 H5439 H1540 H6172

עַל אֶלְפָתָה כֹּל אֶת וְכָא
 unto them that they may see H7200 H853 H3605 all thy nakedness H6172
 H413

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 13:22 (Parallel theme): And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare.

Hosea 2:10 (Love): And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand.

Hosea 2:3 (Parallel theme): Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.

Revelation 17:16 (Parallel theme): And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

Jeremiah 13:26 (Parallel theme): Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear.

Hosea 8:10 (Parallel theme): Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes.

Lamentations 1:8 (Parallel theme): Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness: yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward.

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