

Ezekiel 16:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these things; behold, therefore I also will recompense thy way upon thine head, saith the Lord GOD: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations.

Analysis

Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth (לֹא זָכַרְתָּ אֶת־יָמַי) —the Hebrew *zakar* (remember) implies not mere recollection but covenant faithfulness and grateful response. Jerusalem failed to remember God's gracious deliverance when she was abandoned and vulnerable. **Fretted me** (רָגַזְתָּ, *ragaz*) means to provoke to trembling anger—God's response to covenant betrayal.

I also will recompense thy way upon thine head employs the Hebrew principle of *lex talionis* (measure-for-measure justice). The very lewdness (זִמְמָה, *zimmah*)—premeditated wickedness or sexual depravity—that Jerusalem committed will return upon her. This verse transitions from the extended marriage metaphor to explicit pronouncement of judgment, establishing that divine wrath is neither arbitrary nor excessive but proportionate response to ingratitude and betrayal.

Historical Context

Written circa 593-571 BC during the Babylonian exile, this oracle recalls Jerusalem's history from her Canaanite origins through David's conquest and Solomon's glory. The 'days of thy youth' references God's foundational acts of redemption in the Exodus and wilderness period, establishing the covenant

relationship Jerusalem violated through syncretistic worship and political alliances with Egypt and Babylon.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does spiritual amnesia—forgetting God's past faithfulness—lead to present unfaithfulness in your life?
2. What does the principle of recompense 'upon thine head' reveal about the self-destructive nature of sin?

Interlinear Text

לֹא אָשָׁר יַעַן זָכַרְתָּ י אֶת יְמֵי
H3282 H834 H3808 H2142 H853 H3117
Because thou hast not remembered the days

אֲנִי וְגַם אֵל לָהּ בְּכָל ל י וַתִּרְגְּזִי נְעוּב יוֹ
H0 H3605 H428 H1571 H589 H5271 H7264
of thy youth but hast fretted

בְּרֹאשׁ בְּדֶרֶךְ יְהוָה אֲנִי
H1887 H1870 H7218
me in all these things behold thy way upon thine head

וְלֹא אֵל יְהוָה אֲדַבֵּר י נֶאֱמַר נָתַתִּי
H5414 H5002 H136 H3069 H3808
therefore I also will recompense saith the Lord GOD

כָּל עַל הַזִּמָּה אֶת עֲשִׂיתִי
H6213 H853 H2154 H5921 H3605
and thou shalt not commit this lewdness

וְעַבְדֵּי יְהוָה
H8441
above all thine abominations

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 16:22 (Parallel theme): And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, and wast polluted in thy blood.

Psalms 78:42 (Parallel theme): They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.

Ezekiel 22:31 (References God): Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 11:21 (References God): But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.

Isaiah 63:10 (Parallel theme): But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

Psalms 106:13 (Parallel theme): They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel:

Ezekiel 6:9 (Parallel theme): And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.

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