

Ezekiel 16:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.

Analysis

This verse presents Cast out in open field in Ezekiel's extended allegory of Jerusalem as God's bride. Rejected and left to die, 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. Rejected and left to die 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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Cast out in open field 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

מֵאֶלְעָזֶר אֶת-תְּלִבָּה לֹא

H3808

pitied

H2347

H5921

None eye

H5869

עַל-יְהוָה כִּי

H0

לְעַשׂ וְתַ

H6213

any

H259

H428

לְחַמֵּל הָ

of these unto thee to have compassion

H2550

עַל-יְהוָה

H5921

תִּתְשַׁלֵּךְ

אֵל

upon thee but thou wast cast out

H7993

H413

פָּנָה

in the open

H6440

בָּשָׂדֶה

field

H7704

בְּגַם עַל

to the loathing

H1604

בְּגַם עַל

of thy person

H5315

בַּיּוֹם

in the day

H3117

בְּלֹדַת

that thou wast born

H3205

אַתָּה:

H853

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 32:10 (Parallel theme): He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

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