

Ezekiel 16:61

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant.

Analysis

Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. God promises restoration that will produce genuine repentance and expanded blessing beyond original covenant terms. The remembrance of sin will produce godly shame, and the inclusion of outsiders will demonstrate pure grace.

Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed describes response to divine grace. When God restores despite unworthiness, genuine repentance follows—not mere regret over consequences but godly sorrow over sin itself (2 Corinthians 7:10). Remembering thy ways in light of grace produces humble shame, not proud self-justification.

When thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger refers to Samaria (north/elder) and Sodom (south/younger) mentioned earlier (v.46). I will give them unto thee for daughters indicates these outsiders will be incorporated into covenant relationship. But not by thy covenant emphasizes this is pure grace, not based on the Mosaic covenant which Israel broke but on God new covenant initiative.

From Reformed perspective, this anticipates the gospel breaking down barriers

between Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:11-22). The new covenant includes outsiders not because they earned it but through divine grace. It also teaches that true repentance comes from experiencing unmerited grace, not from trying to earn salvation.

Historical Context

Samaria (northern kingdom) fell to Assyria in 722 BC; Sodom had been destroyed centuries earlier as paradigm of divine judgment (Genesis 19). That God would restore even these represents shocking grace—incorporating those under ultimate judgment into covenant blessing. This anticipates Gentile inclusion in the church.

The phrase not by thy covenant indicates the new covenant basis differs from Mosaic covenant. Israel cannot claim Gentile exclusion based on Mosaic law which they themselves violated. The new arrangement operates on different principles: grace, faith, internal transformation, not ethnic descent or Torah observance.

Post-exilic Judaism struggled with this tension: should restored community be exclusive (Ezra-Nehemiah emphasis on separation) or inclusive (Isaiah-Jonah universal vision)? Christianity resolved this through Jesus: the new covenant includes all who believe, transcending ethnic boundaries while maintaining continuity with God promises to Abraham.

For Ezekiel audience, this promise was both humbling (Gentiles included in grace) and hopeful (God covenant purposes would succeed despite Israel failure). It pointed toward God ultimate purpose: global blessing through Abraham seed (Genesis 12:3), fulfilled in Christ.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does receiving grace produce genuine shame over sin rather than proud self-righteousness?
2. What does incorporation of outsiders teach about the basis of the new covenant?
3. In what ways does God restoration go beyond mere return to status quo?
4. How should recognition that we have no special claim on grace affect our attitude toward others?
5. What does inclusion of Gentiles in Christ church teach about the scope of divine grace (Ephesians 2:11-22)?

Interlinear Text

זִיכְרָתֶךָ	אַתָּה	לְבָכִיר	וְכַלְמַתָּה	בְּקָרְבָּתֶךָ
Then thou shalt remember	H853	thy ways	and be ashamed	when thou shalt receive
H2142		H1870	H3637	H3947
אֶת	מִמֶּנּוּ	בְּגָדָל וְתִאְוֹתָה	אֶל	מִמֶּנּוּ
H853		H4480	H413	H6996
thy sisters		thine elder	and thy younger	H4480
H269		H1419		
לְךָ אֶתְתָּה	לְךָ בְּנָה וְתִינְתַּת	לְבָנָה וְתִינְתַּת	לְךָ אֶתְתָּה	לְךָ
and I will give	H853	H0	them unto thee for daughters	H3808
H5414			H1323	
מִבְרִיתְךָ:				
but not by thy covenant				
H1285				

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 8:13 (Covenant): In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

Ephesians 3:6 (Covenant): That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

Romans 11:11 (Parallel theme): I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

Romans 15:16 (Parallel theme): That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Ezekiel 20:43 (Parallel theme): And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.

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