

Ezekiel 16:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare.

Analysis

This verse presents Multiplied as bud of field in Ezekiel's extended allegory of Jerusalem as God's bride. God's gracious providential growth, 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. God's gracious providential growth 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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Multiplied as bud of 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

וַתַּרְבֵּי גַּמְתָּ יְגַדְּלָה
thee to multiply as the bud of the field I have caused and thou hast increased

H7233

H6780

H7704

H5414

H7235

שָׁדֵד יְמִינְךָ תַּגְדִּלְךָ
and waxen great and thou art come to excellent ornaments thy breasts

H1431

H935

H1157

H5716

H7699

עָרָם וְעַרְיוֹן
whereas thou wast naked and bare

H3559

H8181

H6779

H859

H5903

H6181

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 1:7 (Parallel theme): And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

Isaiah 62:3 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

Deuteronomy 1:10 (Parallel theme): The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.