

Ezekiel 16:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.

Analysis

This verse presents Covered thy nakedness in Ezekiel's extended allegory of Jerusalem as God's bride. God's covenant covering and protection, 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 covenant covering and protection 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

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Covered thy nakedness 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

וְאָעֲבָרָה Now when I passed H5674	עַל יְיָ H5921	וְאָרָאָה by thee and looked H7200	יְהוָה H2009	עַתָּה upon thee behold thy time H6256		
עַתָּה upon thee behold thy time H6256	דֶּד יָם of love H1730	וְאָפָרָה and I spread H6566	כְּנָפִי my skirt H3671	עַל יְיָ H5921		
וְאֶכְסָה over thee and covered H3680	עֲרוֹתֶיךָ thy nakedness H6172	וְאָשָׁבָע yea I swear H7650	לְךָ H0	וְאָבֹא unto thee and entered H935		
בְּבֵרִית into a covenant H1285	אִתְּךָ H854	נֶאֱמַר with thee saith H5002	אֲדֹנָי the Lord H136	יְהוָה GOD H3069	וְתִהְיֶה H1961	לִי H0

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 43:4 (Love): Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

Ruth 3:9 (Parallel theme): And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.

Romans 5:8 (Love): But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Ezekiel 16:6 (Parallel theme): And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.

Exodus 32:13 (Parallel theme): Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will

multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.

Deuteronomy 4:31 (Covenant): (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.

Hosea 11:1 (Love): When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

1 Samuel 12:22 (References Lord): For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

Jeremiah 31:3 (Love): The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

Jeremiah 31:32 (Covenant): Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: