

Ezekiel 20:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries;

Analysis

'I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries.' Despite forbearance, God oaths that future judgment will come: scattering and dispersion. This prophesies the exile—Assyrian deportation (722 BC) and Babylonian exile (586 BC). The oath in the wilderness anticipates judgment centuries later. God's warnings are certain even when delayed.

Historical Context

Deuteronomy 28:64-68 and Leviticus 26:33 warned of exile for covenant violation. The northern kingdom's fall (722 BC) and Judah's exile (586 BC) fulfilled these warnings. Ezekiel's audience, already experiencing this judgment, needed to understand it was long-decreed consequence of persistent rebellion.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do we understand God's delayed judgment without presuming it won't come?
2. What does the certainty of God's oaths teach about the reliability of both His promises and warnings?

Interlinear Text

בְּמִדְבָּר רַקְבָּנִים אֶת נְשֵׁת אֲתִי אֶת יְמִינִי
unto them also in the wilderness
I lifted up mine hand
H1571 H589 H853 H3027 H0 H4057

אֶת מִלְּזָר וְתַּחֲנֵן אֶתְּנָם בְּגֹיאֵי מִזְרָחֵךְ
and disperse them among the heathen
H853 H2219 H1471 H853

בְּאַרְצֹותִים
them through the countries
H776

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 26:33 (Parallel theme): And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

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