

Ezekiel 20:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live;

Analysis

'Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.' One of Scripture's most difficult verses. God 'gave them statutes that were not good'—likely referring to judicial hardening, giving them over to their desired idolatrous practices (Romans 1:24-28). When people persistently reject God's good law, He withdraws restraint, allowing them to follow destructive paths. This is judgment through abandonment.

Historical Context

Verse 26 specifies that this involved child sacrifice, which God had forbidden (Leviticus 18:21, 20:2-5) but which Israel adopted from Canaanite worship. God's 'giving them over' to these practices doesn't mean He commanded child sacrifice but that He judicially allowed their idolatry to run its full destructive course.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do we understand God's judicial hardening without making Him the author of sin?
2. What does Romans 1:18-32's progression of giving people over to sin teach about this principle?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| וְגַם | אֲנִי | נָתַתִּי | לָהֶם | חֻקֵּי יִם | לֹא |
| H1571 | H589 | Wherefore I gave | H0 | them also statutes | H3808 |
| | | H5414 | | H2706 | |
| טוֹב יִם | וּמִשְׁפָּט יִם | לֹא | יְהִי וְ | בָּהֶם: | |
| that were not good | and judgments | H3808 | whereby they should not live | H0 | |
| H2896 | H4941 | | H2421 | | |

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 81:12 (Parallel theme): So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.

Isaiah 66:4 (Parallel theme): I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

Ezekiel 20:39 (Parallel theme): As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols.

Deuteronomy 28:36 (Parallel theme): The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.

Ezekiel 20:26 (Parallel theme): And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the LORD.

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