

Ezekiel 21:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Cry and howl, son of man: for it shall be upon my people, it shall be upon all the princes of Israel: terrors by reason of the sword shall be upon my people: smite therefore upon thy thigh.

Analysis

"Cry and howl, son of man: for it shall be upon my people, it shall be upon all the princes of Israel: terrors by reason of the sword shall be upon my people: smite therefore upon thy thigh." Ezekiel commanded to "cry and howl" (zaaq veheilel, זָעַק וְהִילֵל) expresses appropriate grief over coming judgment. The sword threatens both people and princes—comprehensive judgment sparing no rank. "Smite upon thy thigh" was ancient gesture of grief and horror (Jeremiah 31:19). True prophets grieve judgment's necessity even while faithfully proclaiming it—they don't celebrate others' suffering.

Historical Context

When judgment came, both common people and nobility suffered. Princes were executed (2 Kings 25:18-21), and population decimated or exiled. Ezekiel's commanded grief models appropriate prophetic response—combining unflinching truth-telling with genuine compassion. This balance prevents both minimizing judgment (false grace) and celebrating it (lacking love). The prophet must proclaim hard truth while mourning its necessity.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does commanded grief over judgment model balancing truth-telling with compassion?
2. What does judgment affecting both people and princes teach about universal accountability?
3. In what ways should proclaiming judgment today be accompanied by genuine grief over sin's consequences?

Interlinear Text

הִיֵּתָה הַיָּא כִּי אָדָם בֶּן וְהִלֵּל זַעֲקָה
Cry **and howl** **son** **of man** H3588 H1931 H1961
H2199 H3213 H1121 H120

נְשִׂיאֵי כָּל הָיָא עַמִּי
for it shall be upon my people H1931 H3605 **it shall be upon all the princes**
H5971 H5387

אֶת הַיָּד הַזֶּה אֶל מְגוּרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
of Israel **terrors** **by reason of** **the sword** H1961 H854
H3478 H4048 H413 H2719

יָרֵךְ אֶל סֵף קֶלֶךְ עַמִּי
for it shall be upon my people H3651 **smite** **by reason of** **therefore upon thy thigh**
H5971 H5606 H413 H3409

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 21:6 (Parallel theme): Sigh therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of thy loins; and with bitterness sigh before their eyes.

Joel 1:13 (Parallel theme): Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God.

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