

Ezekiel 21:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.

Analysis

"And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked." The terrifying declaration "I am against thee" (hineni elayikh, הִנֵּנִי אֵלַיִךְ) reverses holy war—God fights against Israel, not for them. The drawn sword represents active judgment, not passive permission. Shockingly, both "righteous and wicked" face the sword—comprehensive judgment spares none. This doesn't contradict selective preservation (9:4) but emphasizes judgment's comprehensive scope affecting all residents.

Historical Context

When Babylon conquered Jerusalem, both righteous and wicked experienced the siege, violence, and exile. Daniel, Ezekiel, and other faithful Jews suffered exile alongside idolaters. However, the righteous experienced judgment as discipline leading to restoration, while the wicked faced it as deserved punishment leading to destruction. The same event served different divine purposes for different people—purifying the righteous, punishing the wicked.

Additional Cross-References

Job 9:22 (Evil): This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

Jeremiah 21:13 (References Lord): Behold, I am against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain, saith the LORD; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations?

Nahum 3:5 (References Lord): Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame.

Nahum 2:13 (Word): Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.

Ezekiel 5:8 (References Lord): Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations.