

Ezekiel 22:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver.

Analysis

Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross (ben adam hayu li beit-Yisrael le'sigim, בֶן־אָדָם הָיָה לִי בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְסָגִים) The term sigim means "dross" or "slag"—the worthless impurities removed during metal refining. Israel, intended to be refined silver (precious metal for God's use), had become entirely waste material. This inverts the expected metaphor: instead of refining producing pure silver, the entire nation proved to be impurities with no precious metal remaining.

All they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. The list of base metals—nechoshet (נְחֹשֶׁת, brass/bronze), bedil (בְּדֵיל, tin), barzel (בָּרֶזֶל, iron), oferel (עִזְפְּרַת, lead)—describes the worthless residue left after smelting. The phrase "dross of silver" (siggei kaseph, סִגְעֵי כָּסֶף) is devastating: they are not even useful metals, only the waste byproduct. Israel's covenant privilege meant nothing without covenant faithfulness.

Historical Context

Ancient metallurgy involved heating ore in furnaces to separate precious metals from impurities. The dross floated to the surface and was skimmed off as refuse. Ezekiel's audience, familiar with this process, would grasp the severity: they were the discarded waste, not the refined product. This imagery appears elsewhere

(Isaiah 1:22, Jeremiah 6:28-30, Malachi 3:2-3), but Ezekiel's version is most severe —total rejection.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'base metals' have replaced genuine godliness in your spiritual life?
2. How does understanding that covenant privilege without faithfulness makes us 'dross' affect your view of religious identity?

Interlinear Text

כָּל מִסְגֵּן יְהוָה לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל יְשַׁבֵּא לִי קַיּוֹן אֶת מִצְרָיִם
Son of man H1961 H0 the house of Israel H3478 is to me become dross H5509 H3605
H1121 H120 H1004 H3564

כִּי וְבַת וְעַזְפָּת רָתֶת בְּתִים כְּחַשְׁתַּת
all they are brass and tin and iron and lead in the midst of the furnace H3564
H5178 H913 H1270 H5777 H8432

סְגִּים סְגִּים
is to me become dross of silver H1961
H5509 H3701

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 1:22 (Parallel theme): Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:

Psalms 119:119 (Parallel theme): Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.

Isaiah 48:10 (Parallel theme): Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

Proverbs 17:3 (Parallel theme): The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.

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