

# Ezekiel 22:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.

## Analysis

**Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves** (זְאֵבִים טֹרְפֵי טָרֶף, ze'evim torefei taref)—the wolf metaphor intensifies. While verse 25's prophets are lions (majestic predators), verse 27's political leaders are wolves (pack hunters, cowardly scavengers). Both **shed blood** (שָׁפַךְ דָּם, shefakh-dam) and **destroy souls** (אַבְּדוּ נַפְשׁוֹת, abbed nefashot).

The motive: **to get dishonest gain** (לְמַעַן בָּצַע בְּצַעַת, lema'an betso'a batsa)—literally 'for the sake of cutting off profit,' the same word used in the tenth commandment's prohibition against coveting. Jesus warned of wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15); Ezekiel shows wolves in royal robes.

## Historical Context

Judah's final kings (Jehoiakim, Zedekiah) taxed mercilessly to pay tribute to Egypt and Babylon while enriching themselves. Jeremiah 22:13-17 specifically condemns Jehoiakim for building his palace with forced labor and bloodshed. The princes' 'dishonest gain' bankrupted the nation morally and economically.

## Related Passages

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does political power combined with greed create the 'wolf' leaders Ezekiel describes?
2. In what ways might Christian leaders today pursue 'dishonest gain' under the guise of ministry?

## Interlinear Text

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שָׁרֵי יָהּ	בְּקִרְבֹּהָ	כְּזֵאֵב יָם	ט' רָפִי	ט' רֶף	לְשָׁפֹךְ
Her princes	in the midst	thereof are like wolves	ravening	the prey	to shed
H8269	H7130	H2061	H2963	H2964	H8210
דָּם	לְאַבֵּד דָּ	נַפְשׁוֹת	לִמְעַן	בָּצַע	בְּצֵעַ:
blood	and to destroy	souls	to get	dishonest gain	
H1818	H6	H5315	H4616	H1214	H1215

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ezekiel 22:13** (Blood): Behold, therefore I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee.

**Isaiah 1:23** (Parallel theme): Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

**Ezekiel 22:6** (Blood): Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood.

