

Ezekiel 22:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness.

Analysis

In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood—anshei rakil (אֲנָשִׁים רָקִיל) 'men of slander,' who use false testimony to execute innocent people (cf. 1 Kings 21:10-13, Naboth's murder). Legal systems corrupted by perjury produce judicial bloodshed.

In thee they eat upon the mountains refers to idolatrous feasts at high places, combining false worship with ritual meals. **In the midst of thee they commit lewdness** (zimmah, זִמָּה)—premeditated sexual wickedness, often linked with Canaanite fertility cults. Jerusalem's center hosted what should have been peripheral sins, inverting the city's moral geography.

Historical Context

Eating 'upon the mountains' recalls Israel's recurring high-place worship (1 Kings 14:23, 2 Kings 17:10). Despite Josiah's reforms (621 BC), these practices resumed under Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. Archaeological excavations at Tel Arad and other sites confirm incense altars and figurines from this period, physical evidence of syncretistic worship.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do false witness and bloodshed demonstrate the social consequences of breaking the ninth and sixth commandments together?
2. What modern equivalents exist for 'eating upon the mountains'—mixing worship with cultural practices that compromise covenant loyalty?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵלֶּה	שְׁפָרֶת	לִמְעֵן	בְּרֵבִיא	בְּכִיל	אֲנָשִׁים	
In thee are men	that carry tales	H1961	H0	H4616	to shed	blood

בְּרִים	אַכְלָה	בְּהָ	זָפָה	עַשׂ 1
upon the mountains	and in thee they eat		lewdness	of thee they commit
H2022	H398	H0	H2154	H6213

בְּתוֹךְ:

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 4:14 (Parallel theme): I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall.

Leviticus 19:16 (Blood): Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD

Hosea 4:2 (Blood): By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

Hosea 4:10 (Parallel theme): For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD.

Ezekiel 16:43 (Parallel theme): Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these things; behold, therefore I also will recompense thy way upon thine head, saith the Lord GOD: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations.

Ezekiel 18:6 (Parallel theme): And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstrual woman,

Ezekiel 18:11 (Parallel theme): And that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife,