

Ezekiel 23:37

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That they have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through the fire, to devour them.

Analysis

That they have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands moves from metaphor to literal accusation. Adultery includes both spiritual idolatry and literal sexual immorality in pagan worship. Blood is in their hands refers to violence, injustice, and specifically child sacrifice (verse 39). And with their idols have they committed adultery summarizes spiritual apostasy. And have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through the fire, to devour them describes the abomination of child sacrifice to Molech. Children born to covenant people belonged to God; sacrificing them to demons was murder of God's own children. This heinous sin appears repeatedly in Judah's history (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6; Jeremiah 7:31; 19:5) despite explicit prohibition (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5).

Historical Context

Archaeological evidence and biblical texts confirm child sacrifice occurred in the Valley of Hinnom (Tophet) outside Jerusalem. The practice combined Canaanite religion with syncretistic Yahweh worship, making it particularly abhorrent—murdering children in God's name while claiming covenant status. Excavations have uncovered remains consistent with infant sacrifice at various Levantine sites.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does modern culture sacrifice children to its idols (abortion, exploitation, neglect)?
2. What makes religious violence especially abhorrent to God?
3. How do we confront contemporary forms of child sacrifice?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵת בְּדִידָּה | גַּם נָא גַּי

H3588 That they have committed adultery and blood is in their hands

H5003

H1818

H3027

H854

וְאֵת בְּדִידָּה | גַּם נָא גַּי

and with their idols That they have committed adultery

H1544

H5003

וְאֵת בְּדִידָּה | גַּם נָא גַּי

H1571 H853

בְּנֵיכֶם

אֲשֶׁר

יְלִדָּה

וְלִ

and have also caused their sons

H1121

H834

whom they bare

H0

בָּעֵבֶר יְרוֹם

לְבָם

לְאַכְלָהָה

unto me to pass for them through

H0

the fire to devour

H402

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 16:36 (Blood): Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers,

and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them;

Jeremiah 7:31 (Parallel theme): And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.

Jeremiah 32:35 (Parallel theme): And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

Ezekiel 16:38 (Blood): And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.

Ezekiel 20:26 (Parallel theme): And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the LORD.