

Ezekiel 23:45

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the righteous men, they shall judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women that shed blood; because they are adulteresses, and blood is in their hands.

Analysis

And the righteous men, they shall judge them after the manner of adulteresses introduces the executors of judgment. Righteous men here refers not to moral perfection but to those executing just judgment as God's instruments—righteous in judicial function. The Babylonians, though pagan, are 'righteous' in executing God's verdict. And after the manner of women that shed blood details dual charges: adultery and murder. Because they are adulteresses, and blood is in their hands repeats accusations from verse 37, establishing juridical basis for execution. Old Testament law prescribed death for adultery (Leviticus 20:10) and murder (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 21:12). God's judgments follow His law. He judges nations by the same standards He judges individuals—law applies universally.

Historical Context

Babylonian conquest served as divine judgment. Though Babylon was itself wicked (and would later be judged in turn—Jeremiah 50-51), God used them as His instrument against Judah, just as He used Assyria against Israel (Isaiah 10:5-6). Pagan nations can serve divine purposes without being righteous themselves—they remain accountable for their actions while accomplishing God's will.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does God use wicked instruments to execute righteous judgment?
2. What does it mean that pagan nations can serve God's judicial purposes?
3. How should we understand tragedies that fulfill divine justice?

Interlinear Text

וְאַנְשֵׁי יָם	צַדִּיקִם	הֵם	יִשְׁפְּטוּ	אֹתָהֶם
H376	And the righteous	H1992	they shall judge	H853
	H6662		H8199	
וּמִשְׁפָּט	נֶאֱפָת	וּמִשְׁפָּט		
and after the manner	because they are adulteresses	and after the manner		
H4941	H5003	H4941		
שֹׁכֵךְ וְ	וְדָם	כִּי	נֶאֱפָת	הֵם
of women that shed	and blood	H3588	because they are adulteresses	H2007
H8210	H1818		H5003	
וְדָם	בְּיָדֵיהֶן			
and blood	is in their hands			
H1818	H3027			

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 20:10 (Parallel theme): And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Hosea 6:5 (Judgment): Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.

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