

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

Psalm 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

וְאֶתְנֶשׁ יְמִינָךְ מֵעֲדֵיכְךָ וְאֶתְנֶשׁ יְמִינָה מֵעֲדֵיכְהָ

H376

And the righteous

H6662

הַ מָּה

H1992

וְשִׁפְטוּ וְ

they shall judge

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אַתָּה מֵ

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וְמִשְׁפֵּט

and after the manner because they are adulteresses and after the manner

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וְמִשְׁפֵּט

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שְׁפָכָת וְתַ

of women that shed and blood because they are adulteresses

H8210

מִתְּבֵנָה וְתַ

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נִאֵפָת

H5003

הַ בָּה

H2007

בְּיַדְיכֶם בְּיַדְךָ

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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