

Ezekiel 23:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours,

Analysis

Oholah played the harlot when she was mine exposes the aggravated nature of covenant sin—her adultery occurred within marriage, not before it. This distinguishes Israel's sin from pagan ignorance; she knew the true God yet pursued false ones. The phrase *tahtay* (under me, while mine) emphasizes relational betrayal. She doted on her lovers, the Assyrians indicates voluntary, passionate pursuit of foreign alliances and their gods. Israel's kings actively sought Assyrian protection (2 Kings 15:19; 17:3), bringing foreign religious practices with military treaties. Political pragmatism produced spiritual apostasy.

Historical Context

From 752 BC onward, northern Israel became increasingly dependent on Assyria, paying tribute and adopting Assyrian religious elements. King Menahem paid 1,000 talents of silver to Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kings 15:19), beginning Israel's fatal entanglement with Assyria that would culminate in the 722 BC destruction of Samaria.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does knowing God make our sin more grievous rather than less?
2. What modern 'lovers' do we pursue while claiming allegiance to God?
3. Why do we seek security in worldly alliances rather than divine promises?

Interlinear Text

בָּלְעָלָה יְהוָה תִּתְעַדְּבָּךְ וְעַל
played the harlot And Aholah when she was mine and she doted H5921
H2181 H170 H8478 H5689

אֶל מְאֵבָב יְהִי אֲשֶׁר וְאֶשְׁׁר
on her lovers on the Assyrians her neighbours H7138
H157 H413 H804

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 5:13 (Parallel theme): When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.

2 Kings 16:7 (Parallel theme): So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.

2 Kings 15:19 (Parallel theme): And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand.

2 Kings 17:3 (Parallel theme): Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents.

Jeremiah 50:38 (Parallel theme): A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.

Ezekiel 16:28 (Parallel theme): Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatisfiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org