

Ezekiel 24:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

Analysis

"Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down." God announces Ezekiel's wife's death as a sign to Israel. The prohibition on mourning symbolizes shock so great that normal grief responses fail. This foreshadows Jerusalem's destruction producing numbness rather than catharsis. The prophet's personal tragedy serves didactic purposes—demonstrating God's sovereignty even over human affections. This difficult passage reveals that God's purposes sometimes require severe personal sacrifice from His servants.

Historical Context

Ezekiel's wife died suddenly (588 BC) as a sign to exiles. Ancient Near Eastern mourning rituals were elaborate and extended. God prohibiting normal grief rituals demonstrated that Jerusalem's fall would produce shock transcending normal mourning. The prophet embodied the message physically, demonstrating total commitment to prophetic calling. This parallels Hosea's marriage to Gomer—personal life becoming parable. The principle teaches that God's servants sometimes bear extraordinary sacrifices for ministry, trusting divine purposes transcend personal comfort.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Ezekiel's sacrifice of normal grief rituals demonstrate total consecration to prophetic calling?
2. What does this passage teach about God's sovereignty extending even over our deepest affections?

Interlinear Text

בֶּן	אָדָם	הִנֵּנִי	לֵקֶחַ	אֶת	מִמֶּךָ	מִמֶּךָ
Son	of man	H2005	behold I take away	H4480	H853	from thee the desire
H1121	H120		H3947			H4261
עֵינֶיךָ	בְּמַגֵּפָה	וְלֹא	תִסְפֹּד	וְלֹא	תִבְכֶּה	
of thine eyes	with a stroke	H3808	yet neither shalt thou mourn	H3808	nor weep	
H5869	H4046		H5594		H1058	
וְלֹא	תִבַּח וְלֹא	דִמְעָתְךָ:				
H3808	run down	neither shall thy tears				
	H935	H1832				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 22:10 (Parallel theme): Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: but weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.

Jeremiah 13:17 (Parallel theme): But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.

Ezekiel 24:18 (Parallel theme): So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.

Song of Solomon 7:10: I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.

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