

Ezekiel 24:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then I answered them, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Analysis

And ye shall do as I have done continues applying the sign. Ye shall not cover your lips (no verbal mourning), nor eat the bread of men (no comfort from others) predicts the exiles' response when news arrives. Ye shall pine away for your iniquities recognizes that grief will be mixed with guilt—they'll know judgment is deserved. And mourn one toward another indicates communal rather than individual mourning. When Jerusalem falls, the exiles won't need explanation—they'll understand immediately that sin brought judgment. Their mourning will include repentance, recognizing their guilt in the catastrophe.

Historical Context

When word of Jerusalem's fall reached Babylon (Ezekiel 33:21-22, about 6 months after the event due to travel time), the exiles responded with the numbness and guilty grief Ezekiel prophesied. They understood their sin had caused it. This appropriate grief began their path toward restoration, as acknowledgment of guilt precedes forgiveness.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing our guilt in catastrophe differ from mere grief?
2. What role does communal rather than individual mourning play in restoration?
3. Why must we 'pine away for our iniquities' as part of healing?

Interlinear Text

לֵאמֹר:	אֲלֵיהֶם	דְּבַר	יְהוָה	הַזֶּה	אֵלֵּי
Then I answered	H413	them The word	of the LORD	H1961	H413
H559		H1697	H3068		
לֵאמֹר:					
Then I answered					
H559					

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