

Ezekiel 24:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men.

Analysis

And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men—Ezekiel's strange behavior (not mourning his wife's death, vv. 15-18) becomes a prophetic sign for the exiles. **לֹא תַעֲלֹת** (lō' ta'ṭū, 'you shall not cover') refers to the customary mourning practice of covering the lower face. **לְמִנְחָתִים** (leḥem ănāshîm, 'bread of men') was food brought by mourners to comfort the bereaved.

When Jerusalem falls, the exiles' grief will be so overwhelming, so unnatural (losing the temple, God's dwelling), that normal mourning rituals will seem inadequate. Their shock will paralyze traditional expressions of grief. This prophecy came true: when news reached Babylon in 585 BC (33:21), the people were stunned into silence, realizing God's Word through Ezekiel was devastatingly accurate.

Historical Context

Ezekiel's wife died suddenly on the very day God announced Jerusalem's siege would begin (24:1-2, 15-18). This was 588 BC. God commanded Ezekiel not to mourn publicly, making him a living object lesson. Ancient Near Eastern mourning was elaborate: wailing, tearing clothes, covering the head, removing shoes, sitting in ashes.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How did God use Ezekiel's personal tragedy to communicate His message?
2. When have you experienced grief so profound that normal expressions seemed inadequate?
3. What does this passage teach about God's sovereignty even over our deepest losses?

Interlinear Text

תַּעֲשֵׂת	וְ	לֹא	שְׁפָט	לֹא	תַּעֲשֵׂת
And ye shall do	H834	And ye shall do	H5921	your lips	H3808
H6213		H6213		H8222	
ye shall not cover					H5844
תַּאֲכַלְתָּ	וְ	לֹא	אָכַלְתָּ	וְ	תַּאֲכַלְתָּ
the bread	H376	H3808	nor eat	H398	
H3899					

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