

Ezekiel 27:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing.

Analysis

And they shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes—Ancient Near Eastern mourning rituals: וְהָעָלוּ עָפָר עַל־רָאשֵׁיהֶם (wěhe'ēlû 'āphār 'al-rāshêhem, 'cast up dust upon their heads') and בָּאֶפֶר יִתְפַּלְשׁוּ (bā'ēpher yitpallāshû, 'in ashes they shall wallow'). The verb פָּלַשׁ (pālash, 'to roll/wallow') suggests desperate, unrestrained grief.

And they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing—The repetition of מָר (mār, 'bitter') intensifies the description: מַר־נֶפֶשׁ (mar-nephesh, 'bitter of soul') and מִסְפֵּד מָר (mispēd mār, 'bitter lamentation'). This is not polite mourning but visceral anguish. Yet their grief is selfish—they mourn lost profits, not lost souls; commercial opportunity, not covenant relationship. This contrasts sharply with godly grief over sin (2 Corinthians 7:10). Their 'bitter wailing' reveals the emptiness of lamenting judgment while remaining unchanged by it.

Historical Context

Archaeological excavations at ancient sites show mourning customs: burial jars containing ashes, figurines depicting mourners with raised hands, texts describing professional mourners and elaborate funeral rites. In Phoenician culture, mourning rituals for national catastrophes were intense, public, and extended. Ezekiel's description matches historical records of ancient Mediterranean mourning practices.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What is the difference between mourning consequences and mourning sin itself?
2. How does worldly grief differ from godly grief that leads to repentance?
3. When have you mourned lost opportunities without addressing underlying spiritual issues?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיָה יָחַד	אֶל יָדְךָ	קָרְבָה	וְהָיָה יָחַד		
bald	H413	And they shall make themselves utterly	for thee and gird		
H7139		H7144	H2296		
שָׁלֹכִים	וְיָכֻדוּ	אֶל יָדְךָ	מָרָה	בְּלִבָּם	וְיָכֻדוּ
them with sackcloth	and they shall weep	H413	and bitter	of heart	wailing
H8242	H1058		H4751	H5315	H4553
מָרָה					
and bitter					
H4751					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 22:12 (Parallel theme): And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:

Ezekiel 7:18 (Parallel theme): They shall also gird themselves with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; and shame shall be upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads.

Isaiah 16:9 (Parallel theme): Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh: for the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen.

Isaiah 15:2 (Parallel theme): He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off.

Isaiah 22:4 (Parallel theme): Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.