

Ezekiel 3:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.

Analysis

But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted. God warns Ezekiel that his prophetic ministry will face stubborn rejection. The Hebrew *lo yavu lishmoa* (לֹא יָבֹא לִשְׁמֹעַ, "will not hearken") means refusing to listen with intent to obey. This wasn't mere incomprehension but willful defiance. The phrase "they will not hearken unto me" reveals that rejection of God's prophet equals rejection of God Himself—a principle Jesus later affirmed (Luke 10:16; John 15:20).

"Impudent" (chazqey-metzach, חַזְקֵי-מֵצָח) literally means "strong of forehead," depicting shameless boldness in sin. "Hardhearted" (qshey-lev, קְשֵׁי-לֵב) means obstinate, refusing to be moved by God's word. The forehead represents public demeanor; the heart represents inner will. Together, they describe comprehensive rebellion—external defiance and internal resistance.

Theologically, this verse addresses:

1. the mystery of human hardness against God despite clear revelation
2. the cost of faithful prophetic ministry—Ezekiel must speak knowing rejection awaits
3. God's foreknowledge doesn't negate human responsibility
4. rejection of God's messengers reveals heart condition.

This points to Christ, the ultimate Prophet whom His own people rejected (John 1:11). Yet God's purposes prevail despite human hardness, accomplishing redemption through the very rejection of His Son. Ezekiel's ministry prefigured the gospel's reception—some believe, many reject.

Historical Context

Ezekiel prophesied among Jewish exiles in Babylon (593-571 BC), having been deported in 597 BC with King Jehoiachin and other nobles. While Jeremiah ministered in Jerusalem to those remaining, Ezekiel addressed the exile community at Tel-abib by the Chebar canal. The exiles maintained false hope for quick return, refusing to acknowledge that their exile resulted from covenant unfaithfulness. False prophets encouraged this delusion (Ezekiel 13), making Ezekiel's message of prolonged exile and Jerusalem's coming destruction unwelcome.

The phrase "house of Israel" encompasses both Judah (southern kingdom) and the northern tribes' descendants, all characterized by rebellion against Yahweh. Israel's history from the Exodus onward showed persistent patterns of idolatry, injustice, and treaty-breaking despite God's patience and repeated warnings through prophets. Ezekiel's call came during this climactic moment of judgment—Jerusalem would fall in 586 BC, fulfilling prophetic warnings.

Ancient Near Eastern prophets typically enjoyed royal patronage, delivering favorable oracles. Ezekiel's task was different—announce unwelcome judgment to a people convinced of their righteousness because they possessed the temple. Archaeological evidence from Babylonian exile communities shows Israelites maintained ethnic and religious identity but struggled with theological questions about Yahweh's power in a foreign land. Ezekiel's ministry addressed these doubts while calling for genuine repentance rather than false hope.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does this passage explain the reality that faithful proclamation of God's word sometimes results in rejection rather than acceptance?
2. What does it mean that the people's rejection of God's prophet equals rejection of God Himself, and how does this apply to Christian witness today?
3. How should believers respond when ministering to those characterized as "impudent and hardhearted"?
4. In what ways does Ezekiel's experience prefigure Christ's rejection and the gospel's mixed reception?
5. How does God's foreknowledge of human rejection affect our responsibility to proclaim His truth faithfully?

Interlinear Text

אַל יָבֹא לְשָׁמֶן עַל יְהֻדָּה
But the house of Israel unto thee for they will not hearken
H1004 H3478 H3808 H14 H8085 H413

כְּלֹא יָבֹא לְשָׁמֶן עַל יְהֻדָּה
unto thee for they will not hearken
H3588 H3605 H413 H369 H14 H8085

הַמִּהְהָה: לְבָבֵי יִשְׁרָאֵל יְהֻדָּה מֵצָה וְקָשֵׁר
But the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted
H1004 H3478 H2389 H4696 H7186 H3820 H1992

Additional Cross-References

Luke 10:16 (Parallel theme): He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

Ezekiel 2:4 (Parallel theme): For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.

1 Samuel 8:7 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

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