

Ezekiel 33:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten.

Analysis

This verse articulates God's righteous judgment against persistent sin and rebellion. From a Reformed perspective, this demonstrates God's holiness and justice—He cannot overlook sin but must judge it. The passage shows both the necessity of judgment (God's character demands it) and its purpose (to vindicate His holiness, demonstrate sin's seriousness, and turn people from destruction). Understanding divine judgment helps us grasp gospel grace: Christ bore the judgment we deserved, satisfying God's justice while extending mercy to all who trust in Him (Romans 3:25-26). God's judgment isn't arbitrary or cruel but righteous response to covenant violation and moral rebellion.

Historical Context

This passage was delivered during the Babylonian exile (c. 586-571 BCE) after Jerusalem's destruction. The exiled community grappled with theological and practical questions: Why had judgment come? Would restoration occur? How should they live in exile? The historical context of ancient Near Eastern covenant patterns, conquest and exile practices, and prophetic literature provides essential background. Archaeological discoveries from this period illuminate the exile's realities and the return's historical fulfillment. Yet Ezekiel's prophecies extend

beyond immediate historical context to find fuller realization in Christ and the church, with ultimate consummation in the new creation.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen your understanding of God's character, purposes, or ways of working in history?
2. What specific application does this passage call you to make in your current circumstances or spiritual life?
3. How does this Old Testament passage illuminate New Testament teaching about Christ, salvation, or the church?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי י' H1961	בְּשָׁנָה י' H8147	עָשָׂה ה' H6240	שָׁנָה ה' H8141	בְּעָשָׂר י' H6224
And it came to pass in the twelfth		year		in the tenth
בַּחֲמִשָּׁה ה' H2568	לַיּוֹם הַזֶּה H2320	לְגָלוּתֵנוּ H1546	בָּא H935	אֶל י' H413
month in the fifth	day of the month	of our captivity	came	
הָעִיר: H5892	הַכֶּתֶה ה' H5221	לֵאמֹר ר' H559	מִירוּשָׁלַם H3389	הַפֵּל יט H6412
The city	is smitten	unto me saying	out of Jerusalem	that one that had escaped

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 1:2 (Parallel theme): In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,

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