

# Ezekiel 44:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity.

## Analysis

---

**Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity**—the Hebrew mikhshol (מִקְשָׁול, "stumbling block" or "cause to fall") indicts these Levites not merely for personal idolatry but for leading others into sin. Spiritual leaders bear greater responsibility (James 3:1). The phrase **before their idols** (lifnei gilluleihem, לִפְנֵי גִּלְעָלִים) uses a contemptuous term for idols meaning "dung pellets" or "rolled things"—emphasizing their worthlessness.

**Therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD**—the raised hand signals a solemn oath of judgment (cf. Exodus 6:8, Numbers 14:30). **And they shall bear their iniquity** (nasa avon, נִשְׁאָבָן) means carrying the guilt and its consequences. This perpetual demotion demonstrates that leadership unfaithfulness has lasting effects. The New Testament warns shepherds who scatter the flock face severe judgment (Jeremiah 23:1-2, Matthew 18:6-7).

## Historical Context

---

During Manasseh's reign (697-643 BC), Levitical priests participated in widespread idolatry, even placing idols in the temple (2 Kings 21:4-7, 2 Chronicles 33:4-7). Though Josiah's reforms (640-609 BC) temporarily purged these practices,

the corruption had penetrated deeply. Jeremiah and Ezekiel both condemned priests who led people astray (Jeremiah 5:31, 6:13-15, 23:11, Ezekiel 22:26). The exile demonstrated that institutional religious service without heart devotion to Yahweh brings divine judgment. Archaeological discoveries at Arad, Beersheba, and Dan confirm illegal sacrificial high places operated by Levitical priests.

## Related Passages

---

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

---

1. How does this verse challenge those in spiritual leadership about the long-term consequences of compromising God's truth?
2. In what ways might contemporary Christian leaders cause others to stumble through accommodation to cultural idolatries?

## Interlinear Text

---

גָּלוּלִים מִן לְפָנֵי אֲוֹתָם יִשְׁרָת וְאַשְׁר־רַע־עַל  
Because they ministered unto them before their idols

קָרְבָּן עַל עֲוֹנָם לְמַכֵּשׁ וְלִשְׁרָאָל לְבִתְּהֵר וְלִבְנֵי  
and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity

וְנִשְׁאָה מִן־יְדֵי הָאֱלֹהִים נִאֵם אֶת־אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים  
and they shall bear mine hand against them saith the Lord GOD

וְנִשְׁאָה מִן־עֲוֹנָם  
and they shall bear into iniquity

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Psalms 106:26** (Parallel theme): Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness:

**Ezekiel 20:15** (Parallel theme): Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands;

**Ezekiel 44:10** (Sin): And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity.

**Ezekiel 20:23** (Parallel theme): I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries;

---

From KJV Study • [kjvstudy.org](http://kjvstudy.org)