

Ezekiel 44:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed.

Analysis

And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me—the Hebrew kahen (כהן, "to serve as priest") emphasizes the privilege of priestly mediation now forfeited. The phrase **nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place** specifies exclusion from the inner sanctuary where only consecrated priests could enter (Leviticus 16:2, Numbers 18:7). Access to God's presence requires holiness, not mere institutional position.

But they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed—public disgrace accompanies their functional demotion. The Hebrew kelimmah (כלימה, "shame" or "reproach") suggests lasting humiliation. Their to'evot (תועבות, "abominations") cling to them perpetually. This principle appears throughout Scripture: Eli's house lost the priesthood permanently (1 Samuel 2:30-36), and Saul's dynasty fell for disobedience (1 Samuel 15:23). Privilege forfeited through unfaithfulness cannot be presumed upon.

Historical Context

The distinction between outer court service and holy place access reflected Levitical law (Numbers 18:1-7), where unauthorized approach brought death (Numbers 1:51, 18:7). Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16) demonstrated God's zeal for

proper priestly boundaries. During the exile, the question of who would serve as priests in any restored temple was critical. Ezekiel's vision settled it: only the Zadokite line (v. 15) would have full access; compromised Levites would serve subordinately. This foreshadows the New Covenant reality that all believers are priests (1 Peter 2:9), yet only Christ our High Priest enters the true Most Holy Place (Hebrews 9:11-12, 24).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does this permanent exclusion from the most holy place teach about the seriousness of leading others into idolatry?
2. How should the warning that shame for abominations endures affect our view of casual sin, especially in leadership?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא	וְלֹא שַׁת	אֶלְיָהוּ	לְכָה	לְ
H3808	And they shall not come near	H5066	H413	unto me to do the office of a priest
				H0
			H3547	
וְלֹא שַׁת	עַל	כָּל	בְּקָדְשׁ יְמִינָה	בְּקָדְשׁ יְמִינָה
And they shall not come near	H5066	H5921	H3605	in the most holy
				H413
			H6944	H6944
בְּקָדְשׁ יְמִינָה	וְנִשְׁאוּ	כָּלְמַדָּת	וְתַּעֲבּוֹת	וְתַּעֲבּוֹת
in the most holy	place but they shall bear	H5375	H3639	their shame and their abominations
H6944				H8441
אֲשֶׁר	עָשָׂוּ			
H834	which they have committed	H6213		

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 18:3 (Parallel theme): And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die.

2 Kings 23:9 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.