

Ezekiel 5:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.

Analysis

Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel. Shockingly, even the preserved remnant faces further testing—some of those bound in Ezekiel's skirts must be cast into fire. This illustrates that preservation from initial judgment doesn't guarantee final safety without continued faithfulness. The remnant itself faces purifying trials separating genuine faith from nominal religion. The fire "coming forth into all the house of Israel" indicates that judgment starting with the remnant spreads to affect the entire nation.

This principle appears throughout Scripture: judgment begins at God's house (1 Peter 4:17). Those claiming covenant relationship face stricter scrutiny than pagans. The fire represents both punitive judgment and purifying refinement (Malachi 3:2-3; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15). Some emerge purified; others are consumed. The remnant status doesn't confer automatic safety but subjects one to intensified testing proving faith's authenticity.

Theologically, this warns against presumption. Being part of God's people, having correct heritage, or experiencing initial deliverance doesn't guarantee final salvation apart from persevering faith. The remnant must endure to the end (Matthew 24:13). Only those whom God keeps through faith's preservation inherit

salvation (1 Peter 1:5). True remnant theology combines divine preservation with human perseverance—both are necessary, both are gifts of grace.

Historical Context

Post-exilic history confirms this continued testing of the remnant. Not all who survived Babylon's initial conquest remained faithful. Some exiled Jews assimilated into Babylonian culture, abandoning covenant distinctives. Others returned to Jerusalem but fell into compromise (Nehemiah 13; Malachi 1-2). The remnant itself needed ongoing purification.

The fire spreading 'to all the house of Israel' materialized in various ways: continued conflicts during Persian period, the Maccabean crisis under Antiochus Epiphanes (167-160 BC), and Roman destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD). Each crisis tested Jewish faithfulness, separating true worshipers from nominal religion. By Jesus' time, despite centuries of post-exilic existence, most religious leaders had hardened hearts (Matthew 23; John 8:39-44).

This pattern demonstrates that external preservation (surviving exile, rebuilding temple, maintaining ethnic identity) doesn't equal spiritual vitality. Hearts can remain uncircumcised despite outward covenant membership (Romans 2:28-29). The fire must penetrate even the remnant, refining genuine faith while consuming dead religion.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the testing of the remnant challenge presumption based on heritage or past deliverance?
2. What does the fire spreading from the remnant to all Israel teach about corporate responsibility?
3. In what ways does this passage illustrate the need for persevering faith, not just initial profession?

Interlinear Text

עַד וְמִקְרָם

H1992

תַּקְרִיב

H3947

Then take of them again

וְשָׁלַקְתָּ

H7993

אַל אָוָתָם

H413

וְתַּהֲרֵת

H8432

אֵשׁ

H784

אַתְּ מִשְׁרָפֶת

H853

them into the midst for thereof shall a fire

אֵשׁ

H784

אַל

H413

כָּל

H3605

for thereof shall a fire

H4480

תֵצֵא

H3318

אֵשׁ

H784

come forth for thereof shall a fire

בְּיַתְּרוּלָה:

into all the house of Israel

H1004

H3478

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