

Ezekiel 5:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them.

Analysis

And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them.

This devastating indictment reveals Jerusalem's unique guilt: she has not merely failed to follow God's law but has actively changed (marah, rebelled against/ altered) His judgments into wickedness (rishah, criminal guilt). The comparative "more than the nations" emphasizes that God's covenant people became **more corrupt** than the pagan nations around them—a stunning reversal of their calling to be a light to the Gentiles.

The distinction between "judgments" (mishpatim, legal decisions/ordinances) and "statutes" (chuqqot, prescribed rituals/decrees) encompasses both moral law and ceremonial worship. Jerusalem didn't merely drift into negligence but actively refused (ma'as, rejected with contempt) God's ways. The phrase "not walked in them" uses the Hebrew idiom for lifestyle and conduct—they didn't just break specific commands but abandoned the entire path of covenant relationship. Greater privilege brings greater responsibility and greater judgment when squandered.

Historical Context

Ezekiel prophesied during Jerusalem's final years before Babylonian destruction (593-571 BC), speaking from exile in Babylon to a people in denial about their situation. The surrounding nations—Egypt, Phoenicia, Ammon, Moab—practiced idolatry and injustice that Israel was supposed to expose through righteous living. Instead, Jerusalem adopted their practices while maintaining a false confidence in the temple's presence (Jeremiah 7:4). Archaeological evidence shows syncretism was rampant: Israelite households worshiped Asherah poles alongside YHWH, and the temple itself housed pagan altars. Ezekiel's point is devastating—without covenant faithfulness, Israel's privileges (law, temple, priesthood) only increased their guilt. This prepared the way for understanding that God's ultimate purpose required a new covenant and a transformed heart (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How can religious privilege become a source of greater guilt rather than blessing when not accompanied by faithfulness?
2. What does it mean to 'change' God's judgments into wickedness rather than simply disobeying them?
3. In what ways might Christian communities today be 'more wicked' than surrounding culture despite having greater revelation?
4. How does this verse challenge the assumption that having the Bible, church, or Christian heritage ensures righteousness?
5. What warning does this passage give to those who feel secure in their religious identity while ignoring God's moral demands?

Interlinear Text

וְתִמָּר	אֶת	בְּמִשְׁפָּטַי	לְרִשָּׁעָה	מִן
And she hath changed	H853	my judgments	into wickedness	H4480
H4784		H4941	H7564	
הַגּוֹיִם	וְאֵת	וְחֻקֹּתַי	מִן	הָאֲרָצֹת
more than the nations	H853	and my statutes	H4480	more than the countries
H1471		H2708		H776
אֲשֶׁר	סְבִיבוֹתַיָּהּ	כִּי	בְּמִשְׁפָּטַי	מָאָסוּ
H834	that are round about	H3588	my judgments	her for they have refused
	H5439		H4941	H3988
וְחֻקֹּתַי	לֹא	הֵלְכוּ	בָּהֶם:	
and my statutes	H3808	they have not walked	H0	
H2708		H1980		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 11:10 (Parallel theme): They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.

Zechariah 7:11 (Parallel theme): But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.

Psalms 78:10 (Parallel theme): They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law;

Jeremiah 8:5 (Parallel theme): Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.