

Ezekiel 5:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you;

Analysis

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you; This shocking indictment declares Israel worse than pagan nations—they failed to keep even the basic moral standards surrounding peoples maintained. "Multiplied" (hemonkem, הִמְנַקְמָם) can mean "increased in tumult/disorder" or "exceeded"—Israel's rebellion surpassed pagan nations in quantity and quality. They received God's perfect law yet lived more lawlessly than Gentiles operating from mere conscience (Romans 2:14-15).

The triple negative emphasizes comprehensive failure:

1. not walked in statutes
2. not kept judgments
3. not even maintained pagan nations' standards.

This final point stings—peoples without revelation maintained better social order and basic morality than covenant Israel. The Hebrew construction intensifies the shock: having superior revelation, Israel produced inferior behavior. Knowledge without obedience compounds guilt rather than excusing it (James 4:17; Luke

12:47-48).

Theologically, this confronts religious presumption. External covenant membership, possession of Scripture, and religious heritage mean nothing without obedient faith. Worse, they increase condemnation when violated. Jesus made this same point: Sodom and Gomorrah's judgment would be more tolerable than unrepentant Jewish cities that witnessed His miracles (Matthew 11:20-24). Greater light brings greater accountability. Only Christ's righteousness credited to believers by faith satisfies God's perfect standard (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Historical Context

Israel's moral decline below pagan standards manifested in multiple ways. Despite having laws protecting workers, widows, orphans, and foreigners (Exodus 22:21-27; Deuteronomy 24:17-22), they oppressed these vulnerable groups (Ezekiel 22:6-12, 29). Child sacrifice, explicitly forbidden (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5), was practiced in the Hinnom Valley (2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 7:31). Ritual prostitution, temple defilement, and syncretism filled Jerusalem despite clear prohibitions.

Meanwhile, pagan nations maintained certain moral and social standards. Ancient Near Eastern law codes (Hammurabi, Hittite laws) protected property, regulated commerce, and punished violence. While imperfect, these societies functioned with basic order and justice. Israel, possessing superior divine law, descended into chaos worse than their pagan neighbors—a shocking indictment.

The prophets repeatedly highlighted this shameful comparison. Jeremiah declared even faithless Israel more righteous than treacherous Judah (Jeremiah 3:11). Ezekiel compared Jerusalem unfavorably to Sodom (Ezekiel 16:48-50). When God's people sink below pagan morality despite superior revelation, their condemnation is righteous and severe. Privilege unused becomes a millstone of guilt.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Israel's failure to meet even pagan standards challenge our confidence in mere religious heritage?
2. What modern parallels exist where Christian societies or churches behave worse than secular counterparts?
3. In what ways does greater biblical knowledge increase our accountability before God?

Interlinear Text

הַמְּנוֹכָם	יֵעַן יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי	אֲמַר	כֹּה לְכֵן
H1995	H3068 H3282	H559	H3651 H3541
Because ye multiplied	the Lord	Therefore thus saith	
לֹא בְּחֻקֹּתַי	סְבִיבוֹתֶיךָ מֵ	אֲשֶׁר	הַגּוֹיִם מִן
H3808	H5439	H834	H4480
in my statutes	that are round about	more than the nations	
עָשִׂיתֶם: לֹא	בְּמִשְׁפָּטַי	וְאֵת	הֶלַכְתֶּם מֵ
H6213	H4941	H853	H1980
neither have done	according to the judgments	you and have not walked	
סְבִיבוֹתֶיךָ מֵ	אֲשֶׁר	הַגּוֹיִם מֵ	בְּמִשְׁפָּטַי
H5439	H834	H1471	H4941
that are round about	more than the nations	according to the judgments	
עָשִׂיתֶם: לֹא			
H3808			
neither have done			

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 33:9 (References Lord): So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

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