

Ezekiel 9:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar.

Analysis

And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. This vision depicts divine judgment executioners sent to punish Jerusalem idolatry. The six men with weapons represent destroying angels, while the seventh man with inkhorn represents God preservation of a faithful remnant before judgment falls.

Six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north indicates they come from divine throne direction (Ezekiel 1:4 references north as divine origin point). Their entrance through this gate symbolizes they come with divine authority and commission. Every man a slaughter weapon in his hand reveals their purpose—execute judgment on the rebellious city. This is not arbitrary violence but divinely commissioned retribution.

One man among them was clothed with linen distinguishes this figure from the six executioners. Linen garments marked priestly service (Exodus 28:42, Leviticus 6:10), indicating mediatorial role. With a writer inkhorn by his side shows his function: mark the righteous before judgment falls. This figure may be angelic or

represent divine mercy function—preserving the faithful remnant.

They went in, and stood beside the brasen altar places them at the center of temple worship, where judgment will begin. From Reformed perspective, this demonstrates God just judgment begins with His own house (1 Peter 4:17), and His grace preserves an elect remnant even in judgment. The linen-clad figure anticipates Christ our great high priest who marks His own with the seal of salvation.

Historical Context

This vision employs ancient Near Eastern imagery of divine council and angelic executioners carrying out heavenly decrees. Similar concepts appear in other biblical passages where angels execute divine judgments (2 Samuel 24:16, 2 Kings 19:35, Acts 12:23). The number six (incomplete, lacking seventh day perfection) may symbolize incomplete human number versus divine perfection.

The higher gate toward the north was part of the temple complex, possibly the inner north gate. North held significance in Israelite cosmology as direction from which both invasions and divine manifestations came. The Babylonian army would indeed attack from the north, making this directional symbolism historically appropriate.

The brasen altar was the bronze altar for burnt offerings in the temple outer court, the central location for sacrificial worship. Positioning the executioners there emphasizes judgment begins at the place of sacrifice and worship. Those who corrupted sacred worship face judgment at worship center itself.

The linen-clothed scribe figure recalls the Passover when God marked Israelite homes with blood before executing judgment on Egypt (Exodus 12). This pattern repeats: God marks His own before judgment falls, demonstrating His justice discriminates between righteous and wicked.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does judgment beginning at God house teach about divine holiness and accountability?
2. How does God marking the faithful before judgment demonstrate His sovereignty in salvation?
3. In what ways does the linen-clad scribe figure anticipate Christ priestly and mediatorial role?
4. What is the significance of angels as executioners of divine judgment?
5. How does this passage refute the notion that God indiscriminately judges?

Interlinear Text

וְהִנֵּה הַשְׁשָׁה	וְאֵישׁ	וְיָבֹא	מִדְכָּרָה	שׁ עַר
H2009 And behold six	H376 and every man	H935 and they went in	H1870 from the way	H8179 gate
H8337	H376	H935	H1870	H8179
וְאֵשֶׁת רָאשׁוֹ	מִפָּנָה	אֶפְרַיִם	וְאֵישׁ	כָּל
of the higher	which lieth	toward the north	and every man	weapon
H5945 H834	H6437	H6828	H376	H3627
מְפִצָּא	בַּיד	וְאֵישׁ	בְּתוּכָם	לְבָשָׁ
a slaughter	in his hand	and every man	and one	them was clothed
H4660	H3027	H376	H259	H3847
בְּמִתְהָנָה	בְּסֶפֶר	וְיָבֹא	וְיָבֹא	וְיָמַד
with linen	inkhorn	with a writer's	by his side	and stood
H906	H7083	H5608	H4975	H5975
מִזְבֵּחַ אֶל	פֶּגְמָשָׁת			
beside	altar	the brasen		
H681	H4196	H5178		

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 10:2 (Parallel theme): And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight.

Leviticus 16:4 (Parallel theme): He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

Revelation 15:6 (Parallel theme): And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

2 Kings 15:35 (Sacrifice): Howbeit the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places. He built the higher gate of the house of the LORD.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org