

Ezekiel 9:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

Analysis

And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. Before judgment, God commands marking the righteous remnant. The Hebrew tav (תַּו, "mark") was the last letter of the alphabet, shaped like X or +, signifying ownership and protection. Those who "sigh and cry" (ne'enachim vene'anaqim נְאָנָחִים וְנְאָנָקִים) over sin's abominations receive this protective mark. This foreshadows Revelation 7:3-4 where God's servants are sealed before judgment falls. True believers grieve over cultural and personal sin rather than celebrating or ignoring it.

Historical Context

The mark distinguished genuine believers from mere temple-attenders. Many Israelites participated in idolatry (Ezekiel 8); only the grieved remnant qualified for protection. When Babylon conquered Jerusalem, some Jews survived through various means—Babylonian protection (Jeremiah 39:11-14), hiding, or providential preservation. The vision explains this selective survival as divine protection of the marked remnant. Post-exilic community emerged from these preserved few who mourned sin rather than tolerating it.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does sighing and crying over abominations distinguish genuine faith from cultural religion?
2. What does the protective mark teach about God's knowledge and preservation of His true people?
3. In what ways should believers today grieve over cultural and ecclesial sin rather than becoming desensitized?

Interlinear Text

בָּתָן	יְהוָה	אֵל	עֹבֵר	בְּתִזְבֵּחַ	הַעַד	בְּתִזְבֵּחַ
said	And the LORD	H413	unto him Go through	in the midst	of the city	
H559	H3068		H5674	H8432	H5892	
בְּתִזְבֵּחַ	מִרְשָׁלָם	וְהַתִּזְבֵּחַ	עַל	מִצְחָה	וְתִזְבֵּחַ	
in the midst	of Jerusalem	and set	a mark	upon the foreheads		
H8432	H3389	H8427	H8420	H4696		
בְּאַנְשָׁים	בְּגָנְעָנִים	כֹּל	עַל	בְּתִזְבֵּחַ	בְּתִזְבֵּחַ	
of the men	that sigh	and that cry	H5921	H3605	for all the abominations	
H582	H584	H602			H8441	
בְּתִזְבֵּחַ	בְּגָנְעָשׁ	וְתִזְבֵּחַ				
that be done	in the midst					
H6213	H8432					

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 9:4 (Parallel theme): And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

2 Corinthians 1:22 (Parallel theme): Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Revelation 14:1 (Parallel theme): And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Revelation 20:4 (Parallel theme): And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Psalms 119:136 (Parallel theme): Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.

Jeremiah 13:17 (References Lord): But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.

2 Timothy 2:19 (References Lord): Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Ephesians 4:30 (Parallel theme): And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Exodus 12:13 (Parallel theme): And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

Psalms 119:53 (Parallel theme): Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.

