

Ezra 10:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us.

Analysis

Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand—the proposal suggests delegated authority through representatives (sarim, leaders/officials) rather than mass assembly. This demonstrates organizational wisdom in crisis management.

Let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times (le'ittim mezummanim)—scheduled appointments allowed individual cases to receive proper attention. The phrase 'strange wives' (nashim nokhriyot) refers not to ethnicity per se but to covenant outsiders who worshiped other gods, threatening Israel's spiritual identity.

Until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us—the goal was removing divine charon aph (נַרְאָה, 'burning anger'). This phrase appears throughout Scripture in contexts of covenant violation (Exodus 32:12, Numbers 25:4). The theology recognizes that unaddressed sin brings corporate judgment, while repentance averts wrath.

Historical Context

The proposal for scheduled hearings reflects Persian legal influence—the empire operated through local magistrates and appointed officials. The 'elders and judges' of each city would investigate local cases, bringing results to central authority. This protected individuals from mob action while ensuring thorough justice. The three-month timeline (vv. 16-17) demonstrates this deliberate process.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does this structured approach to discipline demonstrate the balance between holiness and justice?
2. What does the concern for 'fierce wrath' teach about the corporate consequences of tolerating sin in the church?
3. How can modern church discipline processes learn from this model of delegated authority and individual hearings?

