

Isaiah 1:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

Analysis

The lament personifies Jerusalem as a harlot, employing marital imagery for covenant infidelity (cf. Hosea 1-3). Once 'faithful' (Hebrew 'ne'eman'—steadfast, reliable), Jerusalem now teems with murderers instead of righteousness. This stark contrast between past fidelity and present apostasy highlights the depth of moral decline. The metaphor anticipates the New Testament church as Christ's bride, called to purity and faithfulness (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Historical Context

Jerusalem, established by David and sanctified by Solomon's temple, was chosen as God's dwelling place. Its transformation into a center of injustice represents profound covenant betrayal.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How can a community move from faithfulness to spiritual harlotry?
2. What safeguards protect the church from similar moral decline?

Interlinear Text

מְלֹאת	וְ	גָּאָמָן	הַ	נִזְנָת	אֵיכָה
H349	H1961	become an harlot	city	How is the faithful	it was full
		H2181	H7151	H539	H4392
מִבְּצָחִים	וְ	עָטָה	בְּ	בְּ	מִשְׁפָּט
of judgment	righteousness	lodged	H0	H6258	in it but now murderers
H4941	H6664	H3885			H7523

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