

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

מֵלֵאָת י	נֶאֱמַן ה	קִרְיָה	לְזוֹנָה ה	הָיְתָה ה	אֵיכָה
it was full	How is the faithful	city	become an harlot		
H4392	H539	H7151	H2181	H1961	H349

מְרַצְחִים:	וְעַתָּה ה	בָּה	יָלַד ין	צִדִּיק	מִשְׁפָּט ט
in it but now murderers			lodged	righteousness	of judgment
H7523	H6258	H0	H3885	H6664	H4941