

Joel 3:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things:

Analysis

Because ye have taken my silver and my gold—God accuses the Phoenicians and Philistines of plundering temple treasures and covenant wealth. The possessive pronouns "my silver" and "my gold" (Hebrew *kaspi uzehavi*, כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב) emphasize divine ownership. Though Israel possessed these precious metals, they belonged ultimately to God: "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts" (Haggai 2:8). The nations' theft was not merely robbery of Israel but sacrilege against God Himself.

And have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things (Hebrew *machamadai hatovim*, מַחֲמַדַּי הַטֹּבִים)—the phrase *machamad* (מַחֲמָד) means precious, desirable, or delightful things, used for temple vessels and sacred objects (2 Chronicles 36:19; Daniel 11:38). Carrying God's holy vessels into pagan temples was ultimate desecration—the same offense Belshazzar committed using temple vessels for his feast, resulting in immediate judgment (Daniel 5:1-6, 23). This charge likely references various invasions when enemies plundered Jerusalem's temple, carrying sacred objects to temples of Baal, Dagon, and other false gods.

The theological principle is profound: God jealously guards His glory and tolerates no rival (Exodus 20:5; Isaiah 42:8, 48:11). Using holy things consecrated to Yahweh for idol worship provokes His fierce wrath. The Reformed doctrine of God's holiness emphasizes His absolute separation from and opposition to all defilement. Profaning holy things dedicated to Him constitutes cosmic treason deserving severe retribution. This anticipates Revelation's warnings about

blasphemy and idolatry, showing God's character remains consistent—He will not share His glory with carved images or permit His holy things to be defiled.

Historical Context

Tyre and Sidon, wealthy Phoenician maritime powers, engaged extensively in trade throughout the Mediterranean. Their temples to Baal, Astarte, and Melqart were lavishly adorned with plunder from conquered cities. The Philistines similarly took Israelite spoils—most notably capturing the Ark of the Covenant and placing it in Dagon's temple (1 Samuel 5:1-2), which resulted in God's judgment on their cities. Throughout Israel's history, foreign invasions resulted in temple desecration: Shishak of Egypt plundered Solomon's temple (1 Kings 14:25-26); the Babylonians carried vessels to Babylon (2 Kings 25:13-17); Antiochus Epiphanes later defiled the second temple. Each instance provoked divine judgment.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does God's claim of ownership over "my silver and my gold" challenge modern materialism and the assumption that wealth is purely personal possession?
2. What does the desecration of holy things teach about the seriousness of profaning what God has consecrated for His purposes?
3. In what ways might believers today carry sacred things into idolatrous contexts, profaning what should honor God?

Interlinear Text

אֲשֶׁר	כֶּסֶף י	וְזָהָב י	לְקַחְתָּם	וּמִחֲמַדֵּי	הַטֹּבִים
H834	my silver	and my gold	Because ye have taken	pleasant things	my goodly
	H3701	H2091	H3947	H4261	H2896
	וְהָבִאתָם	לְהִיכָלֵיכֶם:			
	and have carried	into your temples			
	H935	H1964			

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 12:18 (Parallel theme): And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and in the king's house, and sent it to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem.