

Amos 2:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god.

Analysis

"And they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god." This verse exposes hypocritical worship. Wealthy Israelites took poor people's clothes as collateral for loans (explicitly forbidden—Exodus 22:26-27, Deuteronomy 24:12-13 required returning cloaks by night), then used these garments as cushions during temple worship. They drank wine bought with money extracted through unjust fines ("wine of the condemned"). The phrase "in the house of their god" reveals the tragedy: they practiced empty religion while violating covenant law. God despises worship accompanied by injustice (Isaiah 1:11-17, Amos 5:21-24, Micah 6:6-8). The Reformed doctrine of justification by faith alone doesn't minimize good works—genuine faith necessarily produces love and justice (James 2:14-26, 1 John 3:17-18).

Historical Context

Israel maintained elaborate worship at Bethel, Dan, and other shrines, complete with sacrifices, festivals, and priestly rituals. But this worship was both idolatrous (golden calves) and hypocritical (combined with injustice). Jesus condemned similar hypocrisy in Matthew 23. Paul warned that religious observance without love is worthless (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). The prophets consistently teach that God values justice and mercy over ritual (Hosea 6:6).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does participation in worship while ignoring injustice mock God rather than honor Him?
2. What modern religious practices might parallel Israel's combination of elaborate worship and economic oppression?

Interlinear Text

וְעַל	עַל	בְּגִדֵּים	סְבִּلִּים	וְעַל	וְעַל	כָּל
H5921	upon	clothes	H2254	laid	to pledge	And they lay themselves down
H899						by
				H5186		H3605
					H681	
מִזְבֵּחַ	מִזְבֵּחַ	יְלִבְנָה	עַנוֹשִׁים	יְשַׁתְּ	בְּ יַת	אֱלֹהִים:
every	altar	the	wine	and	they drink	in the house
H4196		H3196		H8354		H430
					H1004	

Additional Cross-References

Amos 6:6 (Parallel theme): That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.