

Habakkuk 2:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD'S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory.

Analysis

Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD'S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory. Divine reversal: Babylon forced others to drink and be shamed; now God forces Babylon to drink His cup of wrath. "Filled with shame for glory" (מִכְבוֹד קָלוֹן שָׁבַע/sava'ta qalon mikavod)—what Babylon considered glorious conquest becomes shameful exposure.

"Drink thou also" (שֶׁתֶּח גַּם-אַתָּה/sheteh gam-attah) commands Babylon to experience what it inflicted. "Let thy foreskin be uncovered" (וְהֵעֲרַל/vehe'arel) uses circumcision imagery—being exposed as uncircumcised, uncovenant, outside God's people. The ultimate shame for one claiming divine favor.

"The cup of the LORD'S right hand" (יְמִין יְהוָה/kos yemin-YHWH) is divine judgment—God's wrath poured out. This cup imagery recurs throughout Scripture (Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15-29), culminating in Christ drinking the cup of God's wrath at Gethsemane and Golgotha (Matthew 26:39). "Shameful spewing" (וִקְיָלוֹן/veqiqalon)—violent vomiting from overdrinking—depicts utter disgrace replacing former glory.

Historical Context

Babylon fell to Persia in 539 BC in circumstances involving literal drunkenness—Belshazzar's feast (Daniel 5) occurred the night Cyrus's forces entered the city. The empire that humiliated nations was itself humiliated, conquered without significant battle, its king killed, its glory ended. The 'cup' metaphor was fulfilled: God's judgment came exactly as prophesied.

The uncircumcision imagery would particularly resonate with Jews, for whom circumcision marked covenant identity. Babylon claimed divine mandate to rule but was exposed as outside God's covenant—pagans whose success was temporary permission, not permanent endorsement. When judgment came, their true status was revealed.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the principle of divine reversal—the proud humiliated, the powerful brought low—operate throughout Scripture and history?
2. What does it mean that Christ 'drank the cup' of God's wrath at the cross, experiencing the judgment we deserved?
3. How should believers today avoid the arrogance that characterized Babylon—attributing success to personal merit rather than God's grace?

Interlinear Text

שָׂבַע עֵתָה	קָלֹן	כְּבוֹדָךְ:	שָׁתֵה	גַּם	אֶתָּה
Thou art filled	with shame	for glory	drink	H1571	H859
H7646	H7036	H3519	H8354		
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וְהָעֵרָ לְ			תָּס וּב	עַל יָדְךָ	כַּסּוֹ
thou also and let thy foreskin be uncovered			shall be turned	H5921	the cup
H6188			H5437		H3563
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יְמִינִי	יְהוָה ה	וְקִיֵּץ לְ		עַל	כְּבוֹדָךְ:
right hand	of the LORD'S	unto thee and shameful spewing		H5921	for glory
H3225	H3068	H7022			H3519

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 47:3 (Parallel theme): Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.

Revelation 18:6 (Parallel theme): Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

Isaiah 49:26 (References Lord): And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

Isaiah 20:4 (Parallel theme): So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.

Psalms 75:8 (References Lord): For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.

Proverbs 3:35 (Glory): The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

Jeremiah 51:57 (References Lord): And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.

Jeremiah 25:15 (References Lord): For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it.

Hosea 7:5 (Parallel theme): In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorners.

Hosea 4:7 (Glory): As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.

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