

Isaiah 10:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!

Analysis

The purpose of unjust decrees is exposed: turning aside the needy from justice and robbing the poor of rights. 'Turn aside' suggests legal maneuvering to deny the poor access to justice. 'Take away the right' means stripping legal protections from the poor. Widows and orphans—the most vulnerable—become prey to be plundered. This reveals the depravity of using legal authority not to protect but to exploit. God especially cares for society's vulnerable; their oppression guarantees His intervention.

Historical Context

Prophetic literature consistently condemns economic exploitation of widows, orphans, and the poor (Exodus 22:22-24; James 1:27). Archaeological evidence from 8th century BC Israel shows increasing wealth concentration and poverty. Ostraca (pottery shards with writing) record debt-slavery and land seizures. The legal system that should protect the vulnerable instead facilitated their exploitation, justifying divine judgment through Assyrian and Babylonian conquests.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do modern legal and economic systems sometimes oppress the vulnerable while appearing legitimate?
2. What does God's special concern for widows, orphans, and the poor teach about His character?
3. How can Christians advocate for the vulnerable in systems that may legally but unjustly exploit them?

Interlinear Text

וְעַמְּךָ יִתְהַזֵּם אֶל־מִנּוֹת לְפָיִז וְתִשְׁלַח אֶת שְׁלַל מִן־עַמְּךָ
the fatherless may be their prey that widows of my people shall smite H1961 H400 H7998 H853 H4090

יבנָן

and that they may rob

H062

Additional Cross-References

Malachi 3:5 (Judgment): And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 3:14 (Judgment): The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

Isaiah 1:23 (Judgment): Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

Isaiah 29:21 (Parallel theme): That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

Isaiah 5:23 (Parallel theme): Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

Ezekiel 22:7 (Parallel theme): In thee have they set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow.