

Isaiah 14:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

Analysis

'Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.' From earthly splendor—pomp (magnificence, pride), viols (music, celebration)—to grave's horror: worms above and below. This is not just death but degradation. 'Pomp' (ga'on—can mean pride, majesty, arrogance) descends to Sheol; music (literally 'sound/noise of your harps') is silenced. Instead, worms—Hebrew uses two different words: rimmah (maggot) underneath, tole'ah (worm) as covering. The body that wore royal robes now wears worms; the one surrounded by luxury is surrounded by decay. This is the end of all earthly glory apart from God.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern royal courts were marked by extravagant display—music, feasting, opulent dress, magnificent palaces. Babylon particularly was famous for wealth and splendor. Yet death reduces all to worms and decay—regardless of embalming practices (Egypt) or elaborate burial (royal tombs). Archaeology confirms this: excavated royal burials reveal remains that mocked earthly pretensions. The biblical emphasis on bodily decay (worms) underscores human mortality and the vanity of earthly glory. Only resurrection—not burial honor—conquers decay.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 – Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 – Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How should the certainty of physical decay shape our attitude toward earthly wealth, status, and pleasure?
2. What is the only hope beyond the worms—and how does this make resurrection central to Christian faith?

Interlinear Text

וְמִכְסָבֵ יְבָרֶךְ הָ	וְיָצָא עַ	תּוֹלֵלֶת:
under thee and the worms	is spread	the worm
H8438	H3331	H7415

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