

Isaiah 24:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

Analysis

As with the people, so with the priest—the sevenfold parallelism (people/priest, servant/master, maid/mistress, buyer/seller, lender/borrower, creditor/debtor) demolishes all social hierarchy. The Hebrew structure uses emphatic ka (כֵּן, "as") seven times, signifying complete universality. No privilege exempts anyone from judgment—sacerdotal status, economic power, social rank offer no immunity.

This radical leveling reverses worldly privilege: **the priest** (כֹּהֵן, kohen) who mediated between God and people faces identical judgment as the laity; **the master** (אֲדֹנָי, adonai) has no advantage over **the servant** (עֶבֶד, eved). James 2:1-9 echoes this principle—partiality has no place before God's throne. The economic pairs (buyer/seller, lender/borrower) indicate that financial transactions cannot purchase deliverance—mammon fails when God settles accounts (Luke 16:13).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern societies were rigidly hierarchical, with priests, nobility, and wealthy merchants holding privileged positions. Temple personnel especially enjoyed legal and economic advantages. Isaiah's declaration that priests face identical judgment as commoners would have been revolutionary—it asserted that

covenant obligations transcend human social structures. Archaeological evidence from Lachish and other Judahite cities shows no preferential treatment in destruction layers from 701 BC—God's judgment indeed fell universally.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this passage challenge you to examine areas where you expect privilege or exemption from accountability before God?
2. What does the inclusion of economic relationships (buyer/seller, lender/borrower) reveal about God's concern for justice in financial dealings?
3. How should this universal accountability shape the church's approach to leadership and spiritual authority?

Interlinear Text

וְהִי הַ H1961	כַּעֲם H5971	כַּכֹּהֵן H3548	כַּעַבְדִּי H5650
And it shall be as with the people	so with the priest	as with the servant	
כַּאֲדֹנָיו H113	כַּשִּׁפְחָהּ H8198	כַּגִּבְרִיתָהּ H1404	כַּקוֹנֶה H7069
so with his master	as with the maid	so with her mistress	as with the buyer
כַּמֹּכֵר H4376	כַּלֹּאֵ הַ H3867	כַּלֹּאֵ הַ H3867	כַּנֹּשֵׁ הַ H5383
so with the seller	as with the lender	as with the lender	as with the taker of usury
כַּאֲשֶׁר H834	נֹשֵׂא H5378	בֹּנוֹ H0	
so	with the giver of usury		

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 4:9 (Parallel theme): And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings.

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