

Isaiah 28:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

Analysis

But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. After promising blessings for the faithful remnant (vv.5-6), Isaiah returns to condemning Judah's current leadership who mirror Ephraim's drunkenness. **But they also** (ve'elleh gam, וְאֵלֶּה גַּם, and these also) shows Judah isn't exempt—they're as guilty as Ephraim. The repetition of **wine** (yayin, יַיִן) and **strong drink** (shekhar, שֵׁכָר, intoxicating liquor) seven times in one verse creates literary drunken staggering effect.

Have erred (shagu, שָׁגוּ, gone astray, wandered) and **are out of the way** (ta'u, תָּאֻ, erred, reeled) indicate moral and spiritual disorientation. Critically, **the priest and the prophet** (kohen ve-navi, כֹּהֵן וְנָבִיא)—those responsible for spiritual leadership—are drunk. They should mediate God's word and maintain holiness but are incapacitated by self-indulgence. **Swallowed up of wine** (nivle'u min-hayyayin, נִבְלְעוּ מִן־הַיַּיִן) means overwhelmed, engulfed. **They err in vision, they stumble in judgment** (shagu bachazzon kavshu peliyyah, שָׁגוּ בַּחֲזֹן כָּשְׁלוּ פְּלִיָּיָה)—prophets can't see clearly, priests can't judge rightly. Spiritual drunkenness renders leaders useless.

Historical Context

Judah's priests and prophets failed their calling repeatedly. Isaiah condemned false prophets who saw visions in vain (Isaiah 30:9-11). Jeremiah later lamented prophets prophesying lies (Jeremiah 23:9-32). Ezekiel confronted priests profaning holy things (Ezekiel 22:26). Such corrupt leadership led to national catastrophe. Jesus condemned Pharisees as blind guides (Matthew 23:16, 24). Paul warned that deacons must not be given to much wine (1 Timothy 3:8). Spiritual leaders must be sober-minded (Titus 1:7-8, 1 Peter 5:2) to properly shepherd God's people.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does spiritual 'drunkenness' (being consumed by worldly pleasures/concerns) impair leaders' ability to see truth and judge rightly?
2. What happens to God's people when their spiritual leaders 'err in vision' and 'stumble in judgment'?
3. How can believers guard against being led by those who are spiritually intoxicated with power, wealth, or popularity?

Interlinear Text

וְגַם אֵלֶּה הֵי יַיִן שָׁגוּ הַשֵּׁכָר
H1571 But they through wine also have erred and through strong drink
H428 H3196 H7686 H7941

תָּעוּ כֹּהֵן וְנָבִיא שָׁגוּ
are out of the way the priest and the prophet also have erred
H8582 H3548 H5030 H7686

הַשֵּׁכָר נִבְלָעוּ מִן הֵי יַיִן
and through strong drink they are swallowed up of through wine
H7941 H1104 H4480 H3196

תָּעוּ מִן הַשֵּׁכָר שָׁגוּ בְּרֹאָה
are out of the way of and through strong drink also have erred in vision
H8582 H4480 H7941 H7686 H7203

פָּקְדוּ פְּלִילָה:
they stumble in judgment
H6328 H6417

Additional Cross-References

Luke 21:34 (Parallel theme): And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

Isaiah 19:14 (Parallel theme): The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.

Proverbs 20:1 (Parallel theme): Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

Ecclesiastes 10:17 (Parallel theme): Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!

Matthew 24:29 (Parallel theme): Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

Isaiah 3:12 (Parallel theme): As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

Psalms 107:27 (Parallel theme): They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.

Jeremiah 23:16 (Prophecy): Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.

Jeremiah 14:14 (Prophecy): Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.

Micah 2:11 (Prophecy): If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.