

Isaiah 3:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

Analysis

The rhetorical question 'What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor?' employs violent imagery for economic exploitation. 'Grinding faces' suggests crushing, dehumanizing treatment. The possessive 'my people' emphasizes that oppressing the poor violates God's ownership and care for His covenant community. This reflects the principle that mistreatment of the vulnerable constitutes offense against God Himself (Proverbs 14:31; Matthew 25:40), anticipating Jesus' identification with 'the least of these.'

Historical Context

The prophets consistently linked authentic covenant worship with economic justice. Ritual observance while oppressing the poor was spiritual hypocrisy (Isaiah 1:15-17; Amos 5:21-24).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. In what ways might we 'grind the faces of the poor' through economic or social systems?
2. How does God's ownership of 'my people' inform our treatment of the marginalized?

Interlinear Text

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|----------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| מִלָּכֶם | תִּדְכָּא ו | עַמִּי | וּפְנֵי | עֲנִיִּים | תִּטְחֵנוּ |
| H4100 | What mean ye that ye beat | my people | the faces | of the poor | and grind |
| | H1792 | H5971 | H6440 | H6041 | H2912 |

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| נֹאמַר | אֲדֹנָי | יְהוָה | צְבָאוֹת: |
| saith | the Lord | GOD | of hosts |
| H5002 | H136 | H3069 | H6635 |

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 94:5 (References Lord): They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, and afflict thine heritage.