

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

מְלָכָם	What mean ye	that ye beat	עַמְּךָ אֶת	my people	עָמָקְתִּי	the faces	עַמְּךָ יְמִינְךָ	of the poor	עַמְּךָ נִזְבְּךָ	and grind	
H4100			H1792		H5971		H6440		H6041		H2912

אָמַת	אָמַת	אָמַת	אָמַת	אָמַת	אָמַת	אָמַת	אָמַת	אָמַת	אָמַת	אָמַת	אָמַת
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.

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