

Isaiah 42:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

Analysis

The Servant's gentleness toward the weak is beautifully portrayed: a bruised reed ('qaneh ratsuts') He won't break, smoking flax ('pishtah kehah') He won't quench. These images depict the most fragile—nearly broken reeds and barely burning wicks—treated with utmost care. Yet this gentleness doesn't compromise truth: 'he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.'

Historical Context

This prophecy describes Christ's ministry to broken humanity—tax collectors, sinners, the sick and demon-possessed received His compassionate attention. His mission was restorative, not destructive.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's treatment of bruised reeds encourage you in your brokenness?

2. What does balancing gentleness with truth-telling look like in your relationships?

Interlinear Text

קֶנֶף הַ	כְּצוּץ	לֹא	יִשָּׁב וְ	וּפְשֵׁתָהּ הַ	כִּהֵּה הַ	לֹא
reed	A bruised	H3808	shall he not break	flax	and the smoking	H3808
H7070	H7533		H7665	H6594	H3544	
יִכָּבֵּה נָה	לְאֶמֶת תִּ	יֹאצֵּי יָא	מִשְׁפָּט:			
shall he not quench	unto truth	he shall bring forth	judgment			
H3518	H571	H3318	H4941			

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 34:16 (Judgment): I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

Jeremiah 31:25 (Parallel theme): For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.

Matthew 11:28 (Parallel theme): Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Isaiah 40:11 (Parallel theme): He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Psalms 147:3 (Parallel theme): He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

John 5:30 (Judgment): I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

Revelation 19:11 (Judgment): And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Isaiah 50:10 (Parallel theme): Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

Psalms 96:13 (Judgment): Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

Psalms 98:9 (Judgment): Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.