

Isaiah 5:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope:

Analysis

The vivid metaphor of drawing iniquity 'with cords of vanity' and sin 'as it were with a cart rope' depicts willful, laborious pursuit of evil. Far from being pulled unwillingly into sin, these actively drag it to themselves with effort. The cart rope imagery suggests heavy, sustained labor in service of wickedness. This anticipates Proverbs 5:22 ('his own iniquities shall take the wicked') and Jesus' teaching about serving sin versus righteousness (John 8:34).

Historical Context

Judah's idolatry and injustice weren't passive drift but active choice, despite repeated prophetic warning. Willful rebellion, not ignorance, characterized their covenant breaking.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'cords of vanity' are we using to drag sin into our lives despite knowing better?

2. How does recognizing sin as laborious pursuit (not mere weakness) affect our view of repentance?

Interlinear Text

הוֹי	מִשְׁכֵּי י	הַעֲוֹן	בְּחִבְלֵי י	הַשָּׁוְא	וְכַעֲבֹת
Woe	unto them that draw	iniquity	with cords	of vanity	rope
H1945	H4900	H5771	H2256	H7723	H5688
<hr/>					
הַעֲגֹלָה	חַטָּאָה:				
as it were with a cart	and sin				
H5699	H2403				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 23:14 (Parallel theme): I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.

Psalms 36:2 (Sin): For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

Jeremiah 5:31 (Parallel theme): The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

Jeremiah 23:10 (Parallel theme): For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right.

Ezekiel 13:22 (Sin): Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life: