

Isaiah 5:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:

Analysis

Woe pronounced on those 'mighty to drink wine' and 'men of strength to mingle strong drink' satirizes misapplied valor—strength wasted on debauchery rather than righteousness. The ironic 'mighty' and 'strength' applied to drinking capacity mocks perverted values where prowess in vice replaces virtue. This anticipates Proverbs 23:29-35's warning against alcohol excess and Paul's command for sobriety rather than drunkenness (Ephesians 5:18).

Historical Context

Elite culture featured drinking as status symbol and social bonding. Isaiah condemns this indulgence, especially among leaders whose dissipation impaired judgment.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What culturally celebrated 'strengths' are actually vices disguised as virtues?

2. How do we misapply our God-given capacities to pursuits that dishonor rather than glorify Him?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵלֶּה לְשָׁתָּה וְתַּיִן גָּבֹרִים וְאַנְשִׁים
Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine and men of strength
H1945 H1368 H8354 H3196 H582 H2428

לְמִשְׁכָּרָה שָׁכָרָה
to mingle strong drink
H4537 H7941

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 5:11 (Parallel theme): Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!

Isaiah 28:7 (Parallel theme): 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.

Habakkuk 2:15 (Parallel theme): Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!

Isaiah 56:12 (Parallel theme): Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.