

Isaiah 51:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.

Analysis

Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out. The doubled imperative "Awake, awake" ('uri, 'uri, עוֹרִי עוֹרִי) intensifies urgency, rousing Jerusalem from stupor induced by divine judgment. The command "stand up" (qumi, קוּמִי) calls for rising from prostrate defeat to restored dignity. Jerusalem personified has experienced God's wrath through the "cup of his fury" (kos chamato, כּוֹס חֲמָתוֹ).

The cup metaphor for divine judgment appears frequently (Jeremiah 25:15-28, Habakkuk 2:16, Revelation 14:10). "Dregs" (qubba'at, קִבְבָּעַת) refers to sediment at the cup's bottom containing concentrated bitterness. To drink to the dregs means experiencing judgment's full measure. "Wrung them out" emphasizes drinking every last drop—no judgment remains. This is crucial: the cup is now empty; wrath is exhausted.

From a Reformed perspective, this points to Christ who drank the cup of divine wrath fully on the cross. His prayer in Gethsemane—"let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39)—acknowledges the terror of bearing God's fury against sin. Yet He drank it completely, wringing out every drop so His people need never taste it. For believers, the cup is empty; no condemnation remains (Romans 8:1). Jerusalem can awake because judgment is past, not because she avoided it but because she endured it fully and now faces restoration.

Historical Context

The cup of God's fury refers to the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem (586 BCE). Lamentations graphically describes this judgment's horrors: starvation, cannibalism, temple desecration, mass death. The exile was divine judgment for covenant violation (2 Kings 17:7-23, 2 Chronicles 36:15-17). The prophets consistently explained that military defeat came from Yahweh, not Babylonian superiority.

Archaeological evidence confirms the destruction's severity: burned layers, arrowheads, destroyed walls at City of David excavations. Yet Isaiah promises this judgment has ended—the cup is drained. The return from exile demonstrated this, but ultimate fulfillment awaits the eschaton when judgment day passes and new creation dawns. For the church, Christ's cross marks the transition from wrath to favor, from judgment endured to mercy proclaimed.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does understanding that Christ drank God's wrath 'to the dregs' for you affect your assurance?
2. From what spiritual stupor does God call you to awake?
3. How should the church proclaim both God's past judgment and present mercy?

Interlinear Text

הִתְעוֹרֵר י	הִתְעוֹרֵר י	קוּמִי	יְרוּשָׁלַם	אֲשֶׁר	שָׁתַת ית	
Awake	Awake	stand up	O Jerusalem	H834	thou hast drunken	
H5782	H5782	H6965	H3389		H8354	
מִיַּד	יְהוָה	אֶת	כּוֹס	חֲמַת ו	אֶת	קִבַּ עַת
at the hand	of the LORD	H853	of the cup	of his fury	H853	the dregs
H3027	H3068		H3563	H2534		H6907
						כּוֹס
						H3563
הִתְרַעַל ה	שָׁתַת ית	מָצִית:				
of trembling	thou hast drunken	and wrung them out				
H8653	H8354	H4680				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 52:1 (References Jerusalem): Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

Revelation 14:10 (Parallel theme): The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

Isaiah 51:9 (References Lord): Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?

Psalms 60:3 (Parallel theme): Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

Job 21:20 (Parallel theme): His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

1 Corinthians 15:34 (Parallel theme): Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

Revelation 18:6 (Parallel theme): Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

Psalms 75:8 (References Lord): For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.

Psalms 11:6 (Parallel theme): Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.

Ephesians 5:14 (Parallel theme): Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

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