

Isaiah 65:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

Analysis

The contrast between the righteous and wicked intensifies: "Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit." The Hebrew *rinnah* (sing/shout for joy) describes exuberant celebration from *tuv lev* (goodness of heart)—profound inner gladness. This contrasts sharply with the wicked's experience: crying for *ke'ev lev* (pain of heart) and howling for *shever ruach* (breaking/crushing of spirit). The verbs escalate—crying, then howling—depicting increasing anguish. From a Reformed perspective, this illustrates the eternal destinies of the elect and reprobate. The righteous experience overwhelming joy in God's presence (Psalm 16:11, John 15:11, 16:22), while the wicked endure unbearable torment separated from all good (Matthew 8:12, 13:42, Luke 16:23-24). The difference isn't merely circumstantial but essential—flowing from relationship or lack thereof with God. The servants' joy comes from heart transformation; the wicked's anguish comes from spiritual bankruptcy and divine judgment.

Historical Context

This prophecy addressed the divided post-exilic community—some faithful, many compromising. It warned that eternal destinies would diverge based on covenant faithfulness. Jesus frequently taught this same division—sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-46), wheat and tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43), wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). The principle continues: those in Christ experience inexpressible joy (1 Peter 1:8), while those rejecting Him store up wrath (Romans

Matthew 8:12 (Parallel theme): But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Isaiah 24:14 (Sin): They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea.

Jeremiah 31:7 (Sin): For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.

Matthew 22:13 (Parallel theme): Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 13:42 (Parallel theme): And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Luke 13:28 (Parallel theme): There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

James 5:13 (Sin): Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

James 5:1 (Parallel theme): Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.