

Jeremiah 25:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them.

Analysis

And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. The effects of drinking God's wrath cup are comprehensive devastation. The verb *gā'â* (גָּעָה, be moved) suggests staggering like a drunk person, losing stability and control. The term *hiṭhōlālû* (הִתְהוֹלְלוּ, be mad) indicates frenzied, irrational behavior—the chaos and terror of societies collapsing under military conquest. The phrase *mipnê haḥereḇ 'āsher 'ānōkî shōlēaḥ bēnēhem* (מִפְּנֵי הַחֶרֶב אֲשֶׁר אֶנֶכִּי שֹׁלֵחַ בְּיָדֵיהֶם, because of the sword that I will send among them) identifies war as God's instrument of judgment.

This imagery describes war's dehumanizing horror—rational order dissolves into chaos, civilization descends into madness. Yet Scripture consistently attributes such judgments to God's active purpose, not mere historical accident. The 'sword' God sends represents human warfare, but directed by divine sovereignty to accomplish His purposes. This doesn't excuse human evil—Babylon's cruelty was sinful—but recognizes God's providence overruling human wickedness to execute justice. The ultimate fulfillment is final judgment, when God's wrath is poured out completely (Revelation 14:10, 16:19).

Historical Context

The decades following this prophecy (605-539 BC) saw unprecedented warfare across the ancient Near East. Nebuchadnezzar's campaigns devastated nation after nation—Judah, Egypt, Tyre, Moab, Ammon, Edom. The archaeological record

confirms widespread destruction of cities and dramatic population decline. Survivors described the horror: siege, famine, disease, massacre, slavery. This was the 'cup of fury' being administered, societies 'staggering' and descending into chaos under divine judgment.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does this imagery of nations 'staggering' and going 'mad' describe the breakdown of society under God's judgment?
2. What does God's use of human warfare ('the sword I will send') teach about divine providence working through historical events?
3. How should the horror of temporal judgment prepare us to take seriously warnings of eternal judgment?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁתוּ	וְהִתְגַּעְשׁוּ	וְהִתְהַלְּלוּ	מִפְּנֵי	הַחֶרֶב	אֲשֶׁר
And they shall drink	and be moved	and be mad	because	of the sword	H834
H8354	H1607	H1984	H6440	H2719	
אֲנִי	שֶׁלִּי	בֵּינְתֶם:			
H595	that I will send	H996			
	H7971				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 51:7 (Parallel theme): Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.

Nahum 3:11 (Parallel theme): Thou also shalt be drunken: thou shalt be hid, thou also shalt seek strength because of the enemy.

Revelation 18:3 (Parallel theme): For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

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:

Jeremiah 25:27 (Word): Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.

Jeremiah 51:39 (Parallel theme): In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the LORD.

Lamentations 4:21 (Parallel theme): Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz; the cup also shall pass through unto thee: thou shalt be drunken, and shalt make thyself naked.