

Proverbs 31:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.

Analysis

Let him drink, and forget his poverty—The Hebrew rishon (רִישוֹן, poverty/lack) describes destitution. For one **ready to perish** (v. 6), temporary forgetfulness of suffering is merciful. The phrase **remember his misery no more** (וַעֲמָלוֹ לֹא יִזְכָּר־וּ, va'amalo lo yizkar-od) speaks to compassionate relief from amal (עָמַל, toil/trouble/misery).

This stands in stark contrast to verses 4-5 where rulers must never cloud their judgment with drink. The wisdom literature consistently distinguishes between those with ongoing responsibilities (who must remain sober) and those for whom earthly responsibilities have ended (who may receive merciful relief). This prefigures Christ who, though offered pain relief, chose to remain fully conscious to accomplish redemption.

Historical Context

In ancient Israel, wine served social and medicinal functions. The poor rarely afforded strong drink, making this prescription particularly striking—even the destitute dying deserve comfort. This reflects covenantal compassion for society's most vulnerable.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. Why does Scripture permit what it elsewhere restricts—what principle of wisdom governs the ethical use of substances?
2. How should the church balance compassionate relief of suffering with the call to remain sober-minded (1 Peter 5:8)?
3. What does Christ's choice to feel the full weight of the cross teach about redemptive suffering versus escapism?

Interlinear Text

שְׁתֵּה	וְשָׁכַח	רִישׁוֹ	לְעִמְלֻלּוֹ	לֹא	יִזְכֹּר	עוֹד:
Let him drink	and forget	his poverty	his misery	H3808	and remember	H5750
H8354	H7911	H7389	H5999		H2142	

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 5:18 (Parallel theme): And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

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