

# Wine for Gospel wantons...

by Thomas Shepard

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*Spiritual drunkenness is a state of being drunk with the spirit of God's judgment, manifesting itself in various ways, including staggering, reeling, and spiritual blindness, and is a forerunner of destruction when the Lord leaves men in a spirit of unsteadfastness in the truth.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 28, Jeremiah 13:12, Lamentations 3:15, Daniel 5:25, Micah 7:4, Nahum 1:10, John 14:16, Revelation 3:17, Revelation 17:4

**Topics:** "Spiritual Drunkenness", "Gods Judgment"

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## Description

Thomas Shepard preaches on the consequences of spiritual drunkenness as described in Jeremiah 13:12-15, where God fills the inhabitants of the land with a spirit of drunkenness, leading to destruction and no mercy. The causes of this spiritual drunkenness include indulgence in sinful pleasures and corrupt counsel, resulting in staggering, blindness, rage, deep sleep, exposing of one's nakedness, and vomiting up corruption. This spirit of drunkenness is a forerunner of destruction when God fills people with delusions and they reject the truth, leading to division and misery. The preacher warns against spiritual drunkenness and urges to love the truth, seek counsel, and avoid deception.

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## Transcript

"Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings...and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants...with drunkenness. And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together... I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them. Hear and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord has spoken" (Jer 13:12-15).

By "every bottle" is meant all the inhabitants of the land and more particularly the Kings, Priests and Prophets; by "wine" is meant the spirit of drunkenness with which the Lord will fill them; by "the filling of the vessels" is meant that they shall be filled with drunkenness; by "bottles" is meant their weak condition, for they thought themselves vessels of honor which could withstand any stroke but the Lord says, "I will dash them one against another."

"I will do it," says the Lord by filling them with a spirit of drunkenness, and by dashing them one against another. I will break all their relationships asunder.

What is meant by a spirit of drunkenness? Sometimes it means the drunkenness of men's bodies. Other times it speaks of soul-calamities so drastic that men do not know what to do (Lam 3:15). Sometimes it

means spiritual judgments because of sin and therefore refers not so much to misery in general as to spiritual misery, when the Lord gives men up to a reprobate spirit. "They are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger but not with strong drink. For the Lord has poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes" (Is 29:9,10). Jeremiah speaks of the calamity of the people in their being dashed one against another. Drunkenness prepares them for this misery.

Spiritual drunkenness is a forerunner of a people's merciless destruction. "I will show them no pity, nor spare them, but destroy them," says the Lord. Belshazzar had been drinking through the evening and that same night the handwriting of the Lord appeared on the wall: "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN... God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it... You are weighed in the balances, and are found wanting." (Dan 5:25-28). "While drunken...they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry" (Nah 1:10).

## I. WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF THIS SPIRITUAL DRUNKENNESS?

Just as bodily drunkenness comes from excessive drinking of wine or strong drink, spiritual drunkenness comes from overindulgence in those things which God opposes.

1. Spiritual Drunkenness Occurs as the Result of the Excessive Drinking of the Pleasures of Sin. When the wills and affections of men drink at fountains of forbidden pleasure, God will cause them to experience spiritual drunkenness. When they insist on imbibing the things their hearts should be weaned from, things which should be bitter to them, God will give them up to this. In this sense the Prophet calls the Kings, Priests and People, "The drunkards of Ephraim" (Is 28:1; Jer 25:15-18). The Lord puts His cup of just judgments into the hands of those he intends to destroy and bids them take their pleasure in sins. They lose all fear of death and judgment even when both are at their very doors.

2. Spiritual Drunkenness Occurs When Men's Minds & Judgment Drink in the Wine of Delusion or Corrupt Counsel. The Apostle Paul spoke of those who were attracted to lying wonders and would not receive the love of the truth. (2 Thes 2:12). Corrupt doctrines make men drunk in the depths of their understanding (Rev 17:4).

## II. HOW DOES THIS SPIRIT OF DRUNKENNESS MANIFEST ITSELF?

1. Spiritual Drunkenness Manifests Itself in Staggering and Reeling. Those who are spiritually drunk are unsteady and unsettled in holy resolutions, in faith, in spiritual opinions and in matters of judgment. Faith has no real hold on them and thus they stagger from doctrine to doctrine, from viewpoint to viewpoint, from good practice to evil practice. "They are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink" (Is 29:9).

2. Spiritual Drunkenness Manifests Itself in a Spirit of Sottishness and Blindness. The Lord inflicts this just judgment upon men who do not receive the love of the truth. "The vision [is] a book that is sealed (Is 28:7; 29:11-14). Those drunk with wine; even if their reason is not fully taken away, their ability to use it is gone. Their minds befoul them, make them sottish, giddy, stupefied in their understanding and senses (Is 19:14). Such men cannot be moved by reason; they act against common sense and good judgment, given up by the Lord to drunken delusion.

3. Spiritual Drunkenness Manifests Itself in a Spirit of Rage and Fierceness. The spiritually drunk fight against one another. This is very tragic when there is no good reason. The Lord will leave them there until they come to true repentance. I speak of God's own people who hope one day to meet in heaven and yet

will not be friends on earth. No man can persuade them to agree for God Himself has given them up to a spirit of wrangling and contention (Micah 7:4).

4. Spiritual Drunkenness Manifests Itself in Deep Sleep and Prolonged Stupors. Isaiah declared, "The Lord has poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes" (Is 29:10). A man drunk with wine may stagger about, fume and rage, but eventually he will fall down in a stupor and sleep off his drunkenness. Only the awakening providence of the Lord can stir them and unless He awakens them they will sleep on until awakened by the horrors of a Christless eternity (Jer 51:39).

5. Spiritual Drunkenness Manifests Itself In the Exposing of One's Nakedness. Drunken men tell their choicest secrets and expose their nakedness without shame. You find this in the tragic story of Noah's later life and in the account of Lot after the destruction of Sodom. The spiritually drunken expose the shame of their spiritual nakedness without awareness (Rev 3:17). As they deepen in drunkenness they manifest their filthy hidden sins and suppose all the world rejoices with them in their iniquity.

6. Spiritual Drunkenness Manifests Itself by Vomiting Up Corruption and Thoroughly Soiling Oneself and Surroundings. "All [their] tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean" (Is 28:8). The spiritually drunken seem to have almost unlimited capacity to sully and defile. The stench of their wickedness makes the church an unpleasant place and rises up as an offence to the nostrils of God.

### III. WHEN IS THIS SPIRIT OF DRUNKENNESS A FORERUNNER OF DESTRUCTION?

Every spirit of drunkenness is not a forerunner of destruction, but mark this carefully, when the Lord leaves men in such a spirit of unsteadfastness in the truth, a spirit of sottishness and blindness, a spirit of rage and fierceness, a spirit of deep sleep and security so that they manifest their secret wickedness like Sodom and lie all day long in their filth -- I say, when God leaves men to such a spirit as this, it is then most certainly a forerunner of destruction. But when precisely is this drunkenness a forerunner of destruction?

Answer One. When the Lord fills all the inhabitants, from the King and the priests and the prophets to all the inhabitants of the land with this drunkenness.

Answer Two. When God not only fills men with that which makes them drunk, leaving them some room for wholesome counsel, but when they are filled so full with their own delusions that there is no room for wholesome counsel and they are incapable of receiving the truth.

Answer Three. When the Lord gives men over to drunkenness as a judgment, and when the Lord gives men over to such a spirit of delusion that truth, which was meant to do them good, only makes them worse. The Word of God that should awaken men only makes them more secure. In this state the judgments of God abroad in the world, which are calculated to bring them to repentance, only harden them the more,

### IV. WHY IS THE SPIRIT OF DRUNKENNESS THE FORERUNNER OF MERCILESS DESTRUCTION?

Reason One. Because in the condition of spiritual drunkenness a man is disposed to all wickedness and fills up the measure of his sin very quickly.

Reason Two. Because when the Lord gives men over to a spirit of drunkenness, they cannot understand the cause of their ruin; they are besotted and blinded; they do not seek that the plague of the Lord to be

removed, nor do they know the cause of it.

Reason Three. This spirit of drunkenness brings division among a people the forerunner of all other misery. Under such circumstances one need not wonder if a judgment from God may fall, for it has already begun.

IMPROVEMENT ONE. When you see any nation, church or people given over to a spirit of spiritual drunkenness, bemoan and bewail their condition bitterly, for they have the tokens of certain ruin upon them.

IMPROVEMENT TWO. Let all be warned to take heed against all sin, lest because of some sins for which we have not repented, the Lord give us over to a spirit of drunkenness. Judgment is a great work of God in this day. The time has come for Him to give the whole world this same cup to drink, this cup of just and heavy judgment upon men for their contempt of the Gospel of peace. Christ came to unite believers, making them one, not to divide them by every doctrinal distraction. As the result of quarrels among Christians, most men of the world have seen God's perfect ordinances and Gospel as things becoming stale and ready to be discarded. Therefore the Lord will put His cup into our hands and every bottle shall be filled with wine unless the Lord in great mercy preserves some of us. When the Lord leaves a man to a spirit of drunkenness, misery shall come upon him and he shall not even know it.

That we may be preserved let me suggest the following for our help.

First, Beware of drunken company. An ungodly man's words are infectious.

Second, Take heed of being deceived by mere color and pretense of things. The color of free grace is attractive but beware of those who bring in free-vice. The color of liberty of conscience is alluring but look out for liberty to sin.

Third. Dearly love the truth you know already, truths which reveal your sins to you and make much of them, putting them in their proper light, then the Lord will make more known to you and preserve you from error (Jn 14:16,17).

Fourth, Drink no more than will do you good. Drink in those truths you know will do you good; hold them fast and do not let them go (Ps 119:93).

When the Lord withdraws from you because of some known sin in your heart for which He is judging you, go to the servants of the Lord, sober and understanding men, old acquaintances with the truth of God. Ask their counsel. Go with a humble and meek spirit and the Lord will teach you His mind and will. The reason so many are deluded is that they lack instructors.

There are three things that can hinder you from knowing the truth of the Lord: 1. Unthankfulness, 2. Want of prayer, 3. Contempt for the message of those whom the Lord sends to be His ministers to you.

Thomas Shepard, 1605-1649

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