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Woe to Those who Acquit the Guilty for a Bribe

5: 22-23

Woe to those who acquit the guilty for a bribe DIG: Although the sixth woe starts off in a similar way as 5:11-17, what is the focus of God's judgment here? How does Isaiah emphasize the completeness of the judgment they will face? On what grounds will that judgment come?

REFLECT: By what code do you live your life? What can you rely on? Human wisdom? The government? The judges? The court system? Where does the Word of God stand in your life? Is it important? When was the last time you followed God's Word only to find yourself in serious trouble? What does that say to you?

Isaiah declares in **the sixth woe**: **Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks (5:22)**. These verses are a graphic summary of points made in 5:8-21. Here the prophet speaks **against indulgence and bribery, which lead to corruption and injustice**. The sixth **woe** is against the drunken judges who sit in courts of law. Here **Isaiah** uses irony and mockery. The term **heroes** refers to military **heroes** and **champions**. They were **heroes** all right, but not in avenging wrong, but at **drinking wine**. They were **champions** all right, but not in deciding guilt or innocence, but at **mixing strong drinks**. These were the things that they excelled at.



They **acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent** – if the price was right (**5:23**). Courage, honor, and bravery meant nothing to them. What mattered was how

many beers they could hold before going under the table. Can he hold his drink? That was the question of the day! Innocent or guilty? Who can tell the difference? Who *cares* in a society where serving oneself is all that matters? They had a false code of morals and ethics with no spiritual discernment. Something had gone terribly wrong in **God's** vineyard. Who was responsible? The grapes were all bitter and human reasoning could not make them sweet. Could **ADONAI** ignore this perversion? Certainly not.