

Jeremiah 18:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

Analysis

The corresponding condition: "If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." Just as repentance averts judgment (v. 8), persistent evil forfeits blessing. "Do evil in my sight" emphasizes that God evaluates behavior—human rationalizations and cultural relativism are irrelevant. "That it obey not my voice" specifies the evil as disobedience to God's revealed will.

Again God "repents" (relents)—this time withdrawing promised good rather than threatened evil. The consistency: God responds appropriately to human moral choices. Faithfulness brings blessing, unfaithfulness brings judgment. This isn't arbitrary mood swings but the unchanging character of a holy God responding consistently to changing human behavior. God's immutability (Mal 3:6, Jas 1:17) doesn't mean rigid unchangeableness but consistent faithfulness to His character and purposes.

This principle explains Israel's history—cycles of blessing under faithful kings and judgment under wicked ones (Judges, Kings). It warns Christian nations not to presume upon past blessings. Reformed theology's doctrine of common grace teaches that God can withdraw temporal blessings from unfaithful nations while still accomplishing His eternal purposes. Christ's kingdom alone endures forever because it's founded on His perfect obedience, not ours (Heb 12:28).

Historical Context

Israel's covenant blessings were explicitly conditional on obedience (Lev 26, Deut 28). Despite God's electing love, persistent disobedience brought exile. Other nations also experienced rise and fall based on moral and spiritual conditions. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome all rose to prominence and then fell under divine judgment. History demonstrates that no nation is too powerful to escape God's moral governance.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does this principle of forfeited blessing through disobedience apply to your personal life?
2. What are the signs that a nation or individual is 'doing evil in God's sight' despite outward prosperity?
3. How does Christ's perfect obedience secure permanent blessings that conditional obedience could never achieve?

Interlinear Text

בְּקֹלׁ יְשַׁמֵּעַ לְבָلַתׁ יְבָעֵןׁ כְּרָעַ הַיְשַׁעַתּוֹ
If it do evil in my sight H1115 that it obey not my voice
H6213 H7451 H5869 H8085 H6963

לְהִיטֵּן יְבָעֵןׁ אֶמְרָתִי אֶשְׁרַתְמָתִי
then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit
H5162 H5921 H2896 H834 H559 H3190

אוֹתוֹ
H853

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 33:18 (Parallel theme): When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.

1 Samuel 2:30 (Parallel theme): Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

Ezekiel 18:24 (Evil): But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

1 Samuel 13:13 (Parallel theme): And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

Psalms 125:5 (Parallel theme): As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.

1 Samuel 15:11 (Repentance): It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

Numbers 14:22 (Parallel theme): Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;

1 Samuel 15:35 (Repentance): And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

Zephaniah 1:6 (Parallel theme): And them that are turned back from the LORD; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor enquired for him.

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