

Job 12:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.

Analysis

The tabernacles of robbers prosper (יִשְׁלַיּוּ אוֹהַלִּים לְשׁוֹדְדִים, yishlayu ohalim l'shoddim)—Job's response to Zophar challenges the friends' simplistic retribution theology. The verb 'prosper' (shalah, שָׁלַח) means to be at ease, secure, or tranquil. 'Robbers' (shoddim, שׁוֹדְדִים) are violent plunderers, those who destroy and pillage. Job observes that the wicked aren't merely surviving but thriving in security—their 'tabernacles' (tents, homes) are peaceful, contrary to the friends' claim that sin always brings swift judgment.

And they that provoke God are secure (וּבִטְחוֹת לְמַרְגִּיזֵי אֵל, uvatuchot l'margiyzei El) intensifies the paradox. Those who 'provoke' (ragaz, רָגַז) God—irritate, anger, or rebel against Him—nevertheless enjoy 'security' (batuchot, בִּטְחוֹת), confidence and safety. **Into whose hand God bringeth abundantly** (אֲשֶׁר הֵבִיא אֱלֹהִים לְיָדוֹ, asher hevi Eloah l'yado) completes the scandal: God Himself brings abundance into their hands. This observation echoes Psalm 73, Jeremiah 12:1, and Habakkuk 1:13—why do the wicked prosper? Job refuses pious platitudes, acknowledging reality's complexity.

Historical Context

Job's response comes in his debate with Zophar, who insisted the wicked always suffer quickly (Job 11:20). Job counters with empirical observation: the wicked often prosper throughout life. This theme—theodicy, explaining God's justice amid visible injustice—pervades wisdom literature. Ancient Near Eastern wisdom texts

(like the Babylonian Theodicy) also wrestled with righteous suffering and wicked prosperity. Job's honesty about this tension prepared Israel to understand that final judgment, not immediate retribution, resolves injustice (Ecclesiastes 12:14, Revelation 20:12).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do you reconcile faith in God's justice with observing the prosperity of corrupt and violent people?
2. What does Job's refusal to deny obvious realities teach about honest faith versus platitudes?

Interlinear Text

יִשְׁלַךְ יוֹ	אֶהָל יָמִין	לֹשׁ דָּד יָם	וּבִטְחוֹת	לְמַרְגֵּי יִזִּי	אֵל
prosper	The tabernacles	of robbers	are secure	and they that provoke	God
H7951	H168	H7703	H987	H7264	H410
לֹאֲשֶׁר	הֵב יָא	אֵל וְהָ	בְּיָדוֹ:		
H834	bringeth	God	into whose hand		
	H935	H433	H3027		

Additional Cross-References

Job 9:24 (Parallel theme): The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is he?