

Job 15:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A dreadful sound is in his ears: in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.

Analysis

The wicked live in fear: 'A dreadful sound is in his ears: in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.' Inner terror haunts the wicked even during external prosperity. The 'dreadful sound' suggests constant dread of judgment. This describes guilty conscience—sin brings psychological torment. While true for the wicked, Eliphaz wrongly assumes Job's distress proves guilt. Anxiety can arise from suffering without indicating wickedness.

Historical Context

Ancient understanding recognized that fear and anxiety often indicated guilty conscience (Proverbs 28:1). However, Scripture also shows the righteous experiencing fear and distress without guilt (Psalms of lament, Jeremiah's struggles).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do we distinguish anxiety from guilty conscience versus anxiety from suffering or mental health challenges?
2. What pastoral damage occurs when we assume all fear indicates hidden sin?
3. How does the Gospel address both guilty conscience and non-guilt-related anxiety?

Interlinear Text

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|-------|------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| קול | פחד ים | באזן יו | ב של ום | שוד ד | בוֹאֲנֹ: |
| sound | A dreadful | is in his ears | in prosperity | the destroyer | shall come |
| H6963 | H6343 | H241 | H7965 | H7703 | H935 |

Additional Cross-References

Job 18:11 (Parallel theme): Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet.

1 Thessalonians 5:3 (Parallel theme): For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

Leviticus 26:36 (Parallel theme): And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.

1 Corinthians 10:10 (Parallel theme): Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

Revelation 9:11 (Parallel theme): And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

Psalms 92:7 (Parallel theme): When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever:

Job 27:20 (Parallel theme): Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night.

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