

Job 20:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?

Analysis

'That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?' Zophar returns with retribution theology: the wicked's 'triumphing' (רִנָּת, rinnat—shouting, exultation) is 'short' (מִקְּרָוּב, miqqarov—from near, brief), and 'hypocrite's' (חָנֵף, chanef—godless) 'joy' (שִׂמְחָה, simchat) lasts only a 'moment' (רֵגַע, rega). This echoes Psalm 37:35-36, 73:18-20—the wicked's prosperity is temporary. The theology is sound: ultimate judgment awaits. The application to Job is wicked: suggesting Job's prior prosperity proves he was always godless, now experiencing deserved collapse. Zophar confuses temporal prosperity with eternal destiny. The Reformed doctrine of common grace explains why the godless sometimes prosper temporarily without it proving their standing before God.

Historical Context

Ancient wisdom observed that wicked people sometimes prospered temporarily. Zophar uses this to argue Job's catastrophe proves his former prosperity was mere hypocritical appearance masking wickedness.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do we distinguish between temporal prosperity and eternal blessing?
2. What dangers exist in inferring someone's spiritual state from their current circumstances?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	רִנָּה	לְשׂוֹנֵי	מִקָּרֹב	וְשִׂמְחָה	לְחֹנֵף
H3588	That the triumphing	of the wicked	is short	and the joy	of the hypocrite
	H7445	H7563	H7138	H8057	H2611
עַדִּי	רִגַע:				
H5704	but for a moment				
	H7281				

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