

Job 21:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

Analysis

Job distances himself from wicked counsel: 'Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.' Though observing the wicked's prosperity, Job doesn't endorse their philosophy. Their 'good' (prosperity) doesn't rest in their control—God sovereignly grants it. Job rejects their counsel even while acknowledging their temporal success. This demonstrates wisdom: learn from observation without adopting wrong conclusions.

Historical Context

Ancient wisdom literature warned against following the wicked's counsel (Psalm 1:1). Job carefully distinguishes between observing reality (the wicked prosper) and endorsing their worldview (prosperity proves righteousness or proves God doesn't matter).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How do we acknowledge reality without endorsing wrong interpretations of it?
2. What distinguishes observing how God's providence works from adopting the wicked's philosophy?
3. How do we maintain orthodox theology while honestly acknowledging life's complexities?

Interlinear Text

לֹא הֵאָחַז	בְּיָדָם	טוֹבָם	נֶאֱמַר	בְּשֵׁעַר יָם
H2005	H3808	is not in their hand	Lo their good	the counsel
		H3027	H2898	H6098
				H7563
מִנִּי: כִּי רָחֹק				
is far	H4480			
H7368				

Additional Cross-References

Job 22:18 (Evil): Yet he filled their houses with good things: but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

Psalms 1:1 (Parallel theme): Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Proverbs 1:10 (Parallel theme): My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

Genesis 49:6 (Parallel theme): O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall.