

# Job 21:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?

## Analysis

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Job challenges conventional wisdom: 'Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?' This question dismantles retribution theology. The verb chayah (חַיָּה, live) emphasizes ongoing life. Ataq (אָתָּה, become old) means to advance in years, and gabar (גָּבָר, mighty) means to be strong or prevail. Job observes empirical reality: the wicked often prosper, live long, and exercise power. This contradicts his friends' insistence that the wicked always suffer. Job's empirical observation prepares for the book's resolution: divine justice operates on timescales and principles beyond simple earthly retribution.

## Historical Context

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Ancient wisdom literature generally taught that the wicked suffer and perish quickly. However, Psalms 37 and 73 also grapple with the prosperity of the wicked, and Ecclesiastes notes that righteousness doesn't guarantee earthly prosperity. Job's observation challenges oversimplified theology with reality, demonstrating that faith must account for empirical evidence rather than deny it.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does Job's honest observation about the prosperity of the wicked challenge simplistic theology?
2. What does the gap between divine justice and earthly outcomes teach about God's timeline versus ours?

## Interlinear Text

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מִזְעֵד וְעַל  
H4069      Wherefore do the wicked  
                    H7563

לִשְׁעָם  
live  
H2421

וְתַקְרֵב  
become old  
H6275

בָּרָא  
H1571

גָּמָג  
yea are mighty  
H1396

:לִ

in power  
H2428

## Additional Cross-References

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**Job 12:6** (Parallel theme): The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.

**Psalms 37:35** (Evil): I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.

**Psalms 17:10** (Parallel theme): They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.

**Habakkuk 1:13** (Evil): Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?

**Daniel 4:17** (Parallel theme): This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

