

Job 24:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy,
and in the night is as a thief.

Analysis

The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy—Job catalogs violent crimes beginning at dawn. The Hebrew rotseach (רָצֵחַ, murderer) refers to premeditated killing, distinct from accidental manslaughter. The phrase "rising with the light" (עַל־יּוֹם לְאֹור) depicts predators who hunt at daybreak when victims are vulnerable. Job's point cuts deep: the wicked exploit the defenseless poor (ani, אַנְּיָה) and needy (evyon, אַבְיוֹן)—those without social protection. This contradicts the retribution theology Job's friends espouse.

In the night is as a thief—The same murderer operates nocturnally as a thief (gannav, גָּנָב). Job challenges divine justice by noting that oppressors function openly by day and covertly by night, yet prosper unpunished. This anticipates Jesus's teaching that thieves come "to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10), though Christ offers abundant life. Job's lament forces us to confront theodicy: Why does God permit the violent to thrive while the righteous suffer?

Historical Context

Job 24 forms part of Job's final response to Eliphaz (chapters 23-24), composed around 2000-1800 BC during the patriarchal period. Job catalogues social injustices—murder, theft, adultery, oppression of widows and orphans—that go unpunished, directly challenging the retribution principle that suffering always indicates sin. In the Ancient Near East, dawn raids on vulnerable populations were

common in tribal conflicts, and night theft plagued agrarian societies lacking modern security.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Job's honest lament about unpunished evil give us permission to bring our hardest questions to God?
2. Why does God permit the wicked to prosper while the righteous suffer in this present age?
3. In what ways does Christ's victory over evil provide the ultimate answer to Job's theodicy questions?

Interlinear Text

כִּנְגָּבָבָן יְהִי וְבַל־יְלָהָה
and in the night H1961 is as a thief
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Additional Cross-References

Revelation 3:3 (Parallel theme): Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 (Parallel theme): For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

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