

Job 24:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They reap every one his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked.

Analysis

They reap every one his corn in the field (בָּשָׂרָה בְּלִילּוֹ וְקַצּוֹרָה, bassadéh belílo yiqtosóru)—This verse is textually difficult. The Hebrew belílo likely means 'not his own' or 'mixed grain'—the poor scavenge whatever they can find in others' fields. Alternatively, it may reference night harvesting (related to layil, לֵיל, night), suggesting the poor glean secretly, ashamed or afraid. Levitical law guaranteed gleaning rights (Leviticus 19:9-10, 23:22), but Job suggests even this minimal provision is denied or degraded.

And they gather the vintage of the wicked (וְכִרְמֵם רָשָׂא וְלַקְשָׁע, vekérem rasháa yelaqeshú)—The poor are reduced to gleaning in the vineyards of the wicked (רָשָׂא), those who oppress them. The verb laqash (לִקְשָׁע) means to gather late crops or glean—menial work. The irony is devastating: the righteous poor must subsist on scraps from wicked oppressors' abundance. This inverts God's intended order where the righteous prosper and the wicked are judged. Ruth's gleaning in Boaz's field (Ruth 2) shows the system working properly—a righteous landowner ensuring the poor can glean with dignity and safety.

Historical Context

Ancient Israelite agriculture depended on the harvest cycle. Gleaning laws were God's welfare system—landowners couldn't harvest field corners or pick up dropped grain, leaving it for the poor, widows, orphans, and foreigners (Ruth 2:2-3, Deuteronomy 24:19-21). Job's description suggests this system had broken down,

with the poor forced to work oppressors' fields for bare survival. The wealthy had monopolized resources while evading covenant obligations to the vulnerable.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do modern economic systems either protect or exploit the vulnerable who depend on others' generosity?
2. What does it mean that the poor must depend on the 'wicked' for survival in Job's society?
3. How can believers create economic structures that provide dignity, not just charity, to those in need?

Interlinear Text

רָשׁ עַבְדָּו בְּשָׂדָה בְּלִיל וְיַקְצֵן וְרִאֵב וְרִמְמָה וְרִמְמָה וְרִמְמָה
in the field every one his corn They reap the vintage of the wicked
H7704 H1098 H7114 H3754 H7563

לְקַשׁ:
and they gather
H3953

Additional Cross-References

Micah 6:15 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.

