

Job 27:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.

Analysis

He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on—the verb כּוּן (kun, prepare) from v. 16 continues, but now with ironic reversal: the wicked prepares, but צַדִּיק (tsaddiq, the righteous/just) inherits. The righteous "puts on" (לָבַשׁ, lavash) the garments, and **the innocent shall divide the silver**—נָקִי (naqi, innocent/clean) uses חָלַק (chalaq, divide/apportion) for distributing wealth. This echoes Proverbs 13:22: "the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just." Divine justice transfers wealth from wicked hoarders to righteous stewards.

Job articulates the theology of retributive justice his friends have wielded against him. The principle is biblical (Proverbs 28:8, Ecclesiastes 2:26), yet Job experiences its opposite—he, the righteous, has lost wealth. This tension drives the book: traditional wisdom says the righteous prosper and wicked suffer, but Job's experience contradicts this. He affirms the principle while living its exception, creating space for God's later revelation about mystery and sovereignty.

Historical Context

The transfer of wealth from wicked to righteous was a common ancient Near Eastern wisdom theme, appearing in Egyptian and Mesopotamian literature. In Israel, covenant theology promised blessing for obedience and curse for disobedience (Deuteronomy 28). The expectation was that divine justice would manifest visibly in this life through material circumstances—a belief Job's experience challenges.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do we maintain faith in God's justice when we see the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer?
2. What does it mean to be a righteous steward of wealth, whether gained or inherited?
3. How does eternal perspective change our understanding of justice when it doesn't manifest immediately?

Interlinear Text

יָכִין	וְצַדִּיק	יָלִיץ	כֶּסֶף	וְנָקִי
He may prepare	it but the just	shall put it on	the silver	and the innocent
H3559	H6662	H3847	H3701	H5355
יְדַלֵּק:				
shall divide				
H2505				

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 13:22 (Righteousness): A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

Proverbs 28:8 (Righteousness): He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.

Ecclesiastes 2:26 (Parallel theme): For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

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