

Job 27:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered: he openeth his eyes, and he is not.

Analysis

The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered—the verse describes sudden reversal. The verb שָׁכַב (shakhav, lie down) can mean sleeping or dying; here it suggests going to bed wealthy. **But he shall not be gathered** uses אָסַף (asaf, gather/be gathered), often referring to being gathered to one's ancestors in honorable death (Genesis 25:8, 35:29). The negation suggests either no honorable burial or no gathering of wealth—interpretations differ. **He openeth his eyes, and he is not** echoes Psalm 37:10, 36—the wicked vanish suddenly. The Hebrew וְאֵינִי (ve'eynenu, "and he is not") indicates complete disappearance, like Enoch who "was not, for God took him" (Genesis 5:24), but here it's judgment, not translation.

The dramatic image captures sudden loss: a rich man goes to sleep wealthy but wakes to find everything gone—or worse, dies without warning, unable to enjoy his wealth. This describes Job's own experience: he was prosperous one day, devastated the next. The irony is profound—Job describes the wicked's fate while having experienced it himself.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature frequently addressed the sudden reversal of fortune. Wealth provided no ultimate security against divine judgment, plague, war, or robbery. Job's original audience, living in unstable times, would recognize

this reality. The phrase "he is not" recalls biblical language for sudden death or disappearance, emphasizing the transitory nature of human life and possessions.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the reality of sudden loss challenge our confidence in material security?
2. What does it mean to hold wealth as a steward rather than an owner, prepared for sudden reversal?
3. How can we cultivate contentment that doesn't depend on maintaining our current circumstances?

Interlinear Text

עֲשֵׂי יֶרֶךְ	! שָׁכַב	וְלֹא	יֵאָסֵף	עֵינָיו יִ
The rich	man shall lie down	H3808	but he shall not be gathered	his eyes
H6223	H7901		H622	H5869
פָּקַח	וְאִינָנוּ:			
he openeth	H369			
H6491				

Additional Cross-References

Job 24:24 (Parallel theme): They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.

Psalms 58:9 (Parallel theme): Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.

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