

Job 31:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.

Analysis

It is a fire that consumeth to destruction (כִּי־עֵשׂ הִיא אֲבַדּוֹן תֹּאכֶל, ki-esh hi ad-abaddon tokhel)—adultery is compared to esh (עֵשׂ, fire) that devours until abaddon (אֲבַדּוֹן, destruction/the grave). The term abaddon appears six times in Job, always denoting the realm of death or the abyss (Proverbs 15:11, 27:20). **Would root out all mine increase** (תִּבְּרָאֹתַי, tevu'ati, my produce/harvest) shows that sexual sin doesn't stay contained—it consumes everything: family, legacy, prosperity.

This imagery anticipates Proverbs 6:27-28: "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" Sexual sin is self-destructive fire. The progression from heart-lust (v. 1) to potential action (v. 9) to total destruction (v. 12) traces sin's deadly trajectory, paralleling James 1:15: "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Historical Context

Ancient agricultural imagery pervades this verse—fire destroying crops represented total economic ruin. For Job, a wealthy landowner, to lose all his 'increase' meant complete devastation. The connection between sexual immorality and material loss appears throughout Wisdom literature (Proverbs 5:7-14, 6:26-35). This reflects covenant theology: obedience brings blessing, disobedience brings curse (Deuteronomy 28).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the image of fire consuming to destruction challenge the lie that sexual sin can be contained or controlled?
2. What 'increase' in your life could be rooted out by harbored lust or sexual compromise?
3. How does Job's understanding of sin's totality inform pastoral counseling for sexual sin today?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	אֵשׁ	הִיא	עַד	אֲבִד וְ	תֹאכֶל	וְכָל
H3588	For it is a fire	H1931	H5704	to destruction	that consumeth	H3605
	H784			H11	H398	
תִּב וְאַתִּי		תִּשְׁרָשׁ:				
all mine increase		and would root out				
H8393		H8327				

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 6:27 (Parallel theme): Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?