

Job 31:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him:

Analysis

If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me (אִם־אֶשְׂמַח בְּפִיד מִשְׁנָאִי, im-esmach bepid mesanai)—samach (שָׂמַח) means to rejoice, while pid (פִּיד) means destruction or calamity. Sane (שָׂנֵא, hated) indicates one who hates, an enemy. **Or lifted up myself when evil found him** (וְהִתְעַרְרִיתִי כִּי־מָצְאוּ כָע, vehitorerarti ki-metsa'o ra)—hitorer (הִתְעַרְרָה) means to rouse oneself or exult. Job denies schadenfreude, taking pleasure in enemies' suffering.

This remarkable ethical standard anticipates Jesus's teaching to love enemies (Matthew 5:44) and Paul's command not to rejoice in iniquity (1 Corinthians 13:6). Proverbs 24:17-18 warns against rejoicing when enemies fall, lest God be displeased. Job's righteousness exceeded his culture's standards and even anticipated New Covenant ethics. From a Reformed perspective, this demonstrates that saving grace produces supernatural love—loving those who hate us. Job's character reveals God's standard for righteousness, showing why Christ's perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice are necessary—we cannot achieve this level of righteousness on our own.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern culture emphasized honor/shame and vengeance against enemies. Tribal societies especially valued retribution. Job's refusal to rejoice in enemies' downfall radically contradicted cultural norms. His ethic reflected divine character: God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23, 33:11).

Job's righteousness anticipated gospel ethics that would command blessing persecutors (Romans 12:14).

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Job's refusal to rejoice at enemies' suffering challenge our natural desire for vindication?
2. What does this verse teach about the difference between justice (which we should desire) and vengeance (which we should avoid)?
3. How can we cultivate Job's compassion toward those who hate us?

Interlinear Text

אִם	אֶשְׂמַח	בְּכִי יָד	מְשִׁנָּא י	הִתְעַלְּבָ רִתִּי	כִּי
H518	If I rejoiced	at the destruction	of him that hated	me or lifted up	H3588
	H8055	H6365	H8130	H5782	
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נִמְצָא	אֲנִי	רָעָה:			
found		myself when evil			
H4672		H7451			

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 17:5 (Parallel theme): Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.