

Proverbs 1:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

Analysis

The consequence of rejection: 'Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.' This describes the terrifying reversal—when judgment comes, prayers go unanswered. The 'then' indicates too late; the time for mercy has passed. 'Seek me early' (diligently) shows desperate seeking, yet futile. This reflects Hebrews 12:17—Esau found no place for repentance. Common grace and gospel offers have windows of opportunity; spurned, they close. This warns against presuming on future chances to repent.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern treaty language included windows for appeal and curses for breach. Israel's covenant with Yahweh similarly included temporal limits for repentance before judgment. Historical examples include Noah's flood—the door closed (Gen. 7:16), and Jerusalem's destruction after long prophetic warnings. The principle appears in Jesus' parables—the door shut on foolish virgins (Matt. 25:10-12). Opportunity for grace has limits.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does unanswered prayer after persistent rejection challenge assumptions that God must always respond to our calls?
2. What does this teach us about the urgency of heeding God's voice 'today' (Heb. 3:7-8) rather than presuming on future opportunities?

Interlinear Text

אָז	! קִרְאֵנִי	וְלֹא	אָעֲנֶה
H227	Then shall they call	H3808	upon me but I will not answer
	H7121		H6030
	! שִׁחָרָה נְנִי	וְלֹא	יִמְצְאֵנִי
	they shall seek me early	H3808	but they shall not find
	H7836		H4672

Additional Cross-References

Micah 3:4 (Parallel theme): Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

James 4:3 (Parallel theme): Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Job 27:9 (Parallel theme): Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?

Jeremiah 11:11 (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.

Zechariah 7:13 (Parallel theme): Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:

Isaiah 1:15 (Parallel theme): And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Psalms 18:41 (Parallel theme): They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.

Jeremiah 14:12 (Parallel theme): When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.

Job 35:12 (Parallel theme): There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men.

Ezekiel 8:18 (Parallel theme): Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.