

Proverbs 11:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.

Analysis

This sobering proverb announces the death of hope for the wicked. "When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish" declares the moment of ultimate reckoning. Rasha (רָשָׁא, wicked) describes the habitually ungodly. "Expectation" (tiqvah, תִּקְוָה) means hope, thing waited for, confident expectation. For the wicked, death doesn't fulfill hopes but annihilates them—toved (תוֹדֵד, shall perish, be destroyed).

The parallel clause intensifies: "and the hope of unjust men perisheth." Tokhelet aven (תָּקְהַלְתַּה אָוֶן, hope of iniquity or hope of wicked men) emphasizes the futility of ungodly aspirations. Everything the wicked hoped for—pleasure, power, possessions—vanishes at death. They stored up treasures for themselves without being rich toward God (Luke 12:20-21).

This proverb confronts the illusion that wickedness pays. The wicked may prosper temporarily, building hopes on earthly foundations. But death exposes the bankruptcy of godless life. Job 8:13-14 warns: "The hypocrite's hope shall perish: Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web." By contrast, the righteous have hope in death (Proverbs 14:32), for their treasure is in heaven (Matthew 6:20). Christ's resurrection guarantees that Christian hope transcends the grave—"we which have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Hebrews 6:18).

Historical Context

Ancient Israelites believed in Sheol, the shadowy realm of the dead. While Old Testament revelation about afterlife was limited, righteous Israelites trusted God beyond death (Psalm 16:10-11, 49:15, 73:24-26). The wicked, having rejected covenant relationship with Yahweh, faced death without hope. Later revelation in Christ illuminated eternal destinies—judgment for the wicked, resurrection life for the righteous (John 5:28-29, Revelation 20:11-15).

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What hopes or expectations are you building your life upon, and will they survive your death?
2. How does meditation on mortality clarify what truly matters and expose false securities?
3. In what ways does the Christian hope of resurrection provide comfort and motivation for holy living?

Interlinear Text

וְתַחַת	לְתַחַת	תְּקִינֵּת	הַ	אֶבֶדֶתֶה	בְּמִתְּבָנָה	אֵת	שְׁעָרָה	כַּי	וְתַחַת
dieth	man	When a wicked	men perisheth	his expectation	and the hope				
H4194	H120	H7563	H6	H8615	H8431				
עָמָלֵךְ	עָמָלֵךְ	אֶבֶדֶתֶה							
of unjust	men perisheth								
H205	H6								

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 10:28 (Righteousness): The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.

Job 11:20 (Hope): But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.

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