

Proverbs 14:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.

Analysis

This proverb contrasts the destinies of wicked and upright. "The house of the wicked shall be overthrown" pronounces judgment. Beyt resha'im yishamed (בֵּית רְשָׁעִים יִשְׁמַד), the house of the wicked will be destroyed). Shamad (שִׁמְדָּה, destroy, annihilate, exterminate) indicates total ruin. The wicked's household—family, possessions, legacy—faces obliteration.

"But the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish" promises prosperity. Ve'ohel yesharim yafriyach (וְאֹהֶל יְשָׁרִים יָפַרְיָח), but the tent of the upright will blossom/ flourish). Parach (פָּרָח, blossom, sprout, flourish) suggests vibrant growth and multiplication. Though described as mere ohel (אֹהֶל, tent—temporary dwelling), the upright's habitation thrives.

The house/tent imagery is significant. The wicked build permanent houses (bayit), seeking lasting security. The upright have tents—modest, temporary dwellings. Yet wickedness's permanence is illusion; righteousness's temporariness outlasts it. Psalm 52:5-8 contrasts the wicked uprooted with the righteous flourishing like olive trees. Jesus warned against building on sand (Matthew 7:26-27). Hebrews 11:9-10 says Abraham dwelt in tents, seeking a city whose builder is God. Believers are pilgrims whose tent-dwelling on earth gives way to eternal dwelling in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:1). True flourishing comes through righteousness, not wicked accumulation.

Historical Context

Ancient Israel transitioned from nomadic tent-dwelling to settled house-building. The patriarchs lived in tents (Genesis 12:8, 18:1). Permanent houses represented stability and wealth. This proverb subverts expectations—wicked people's solid houses face destruction, while upright people's tents flourish. Israel's exile demonstrated this: wicked kings' palaces were razed, while faithful remnants survived. The principle applies individually and nationally—wickedness brings ruin, uprightness brings flourishing.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'houses' (securities, achievements, reputations) are you building, and are they founded on righteousness or wickedness?
2. How does viewing yourself as a tent-dweller (pilgrim) rather than permanent resident shift your priorities and values?
3. In what ways does Christ provide the eternal 'house' (John 14:2) that makes earthly dwellings merely temporary?

Interlinear Text

בֵּית	רְשָׁעִים	וְשִׁטְמָה	וְאֶפְלָה	וְשָׁרֵם
The house	of the wicked	shall be overthrown	but the tabernacle	of the upright
H1004	H7563	H8045	H168	H3477

וְפָרִיבָה:
shall flourish
H6524

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 3:33 (Evil): The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

Proverbs 12:7 (Evil): The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.

Job 21:28 (Evil): For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling places of the wicked?

Job 8:15 (Parallel theme): He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

Zechariah 5:4 (Parallel theme): I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

Psalms 128:3 (Parallel theme): Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

Proverbs 21:12 (Evil): The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.

Proverbs 11:28 (Parallel theme): He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.