

Proverbs 14:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

Analysis

The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous. This proverb envisions ultimate vindication of righteousness. Shachukhu ra'im lifney tovim (שׁחוּ רְעִים לִפְנֵי טוֹבִים), the evil bow before the good). Shachah (שׁחַח, bow down, prostrate, worship) indicates submission and honor. Uresh'aim al-sha'arey tsaddiq (וּרְשָׁעִים עַל-שַׁעֲרֵי צִדְקָה), and the wicked at the gates of the righteous). City gates represented judgment seats and places of honor. The wicked stand humbly at righteous people's gates, seeking favor. Though not always visible in this age, God's justice ensures evil ultimately bows before good.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern culture portrayed enemies bowing before victors. Gates were where elders judged, conducted business, and exercised authority. This proverb promises role reversal—the wicked who now oppress will someday bow at righteous people's gates seeking mercy. Biblical examples include Joseph's brothers (Genesis 42:6), Mordecai honored while Haman fell (Esther 6-7), and eschatological visions of enemies becoming footstools (Psalm 110:1).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does this promise comfort you when facing present injustice or oppression from the wicked?
2. In what sense will evil bow before good both in this life and in final judgment?
3. How should anticipating this reversal affect how you treat enemies now (Romans 12:19-21)?

Interlinear Text

שָׁעֵר יִשְׁעָר יְמִינֵךְ יְמִינֵלֶב וְעַל יְמִינֵתְךָ יְמִינֵתְךָ
bow The evil before the good and the wicked at the gates
H7817 H7451 H6440 H2896 H7563 H5921 H8179

צַדִּיקָה:
of the righteous
H6662

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 42:6 (Parallel theme): And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.

Malachi 4:3 (Evil): And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

Revelation 3:9 (Parallel theme): Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Isaiah 60:14 (Parallel theme): The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Exodus 8:8 (Parallel theme): Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD.

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