

Proverbs 16:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.

Analysis

A king's lips speak with 'divine sentence' (Hebrew 'qesem'—oracle or authoritative decision), and his mouth 'transgresseth not in judgment.' This describes the ideal king who speaks with God-given wisdom and never perverts justice. This points typologically to Christ, the perfect King whose judgments are always righteous. Reformed theology's doctrine of the magistrate emphasizes that earthly rulers derive authority from God and must govern justly. Kings are not autonomous but accountable to divine law. This verse sets the standard for godly leadership.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern kings often claimed divine status or absolute authority. Israel's theology insisted that even kings were under God's law (Deuteronomy 17:18-20), making this verse a reminder of righteous rule's true source.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do you respond to authorities when their judgments fall short of this ideal?
2. In what ways does Christ exemplify the perfect King described in this verse?
3. If you hold leadership positions, how does this standard challenge your decision-making?

Interlinear Text

ל	א	בְּ	מִשְׁפָּט	תִּ	לְךָ	שְׁפָטִי	עַל	בְּ	קְדוּמָה
A divine sentence	H5921	is in the lips	of the king	not in judgment	H3808				
H7081		H8193		H4428		H4941			
transgresseth	his mouth								
H4603		H6310							

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 44:15 (Parallel theme): And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?

Genesis 44:5 (Parallel theme): Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.