

Proverbs 16:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.

Analysis

The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD. Bachetq yatal et-hagoral (בְּחַטָּק יָטַל אֶת-הַגּוֹל, into the lap is cast the lot). Ancient decision-making used lots—casting stones or dice. Ume-YHVH kol-mishpato (עַמְּיַהּ כָּל-מִשְׁפָּט, but from the LORD is all its judgment/decision). Despite appearing random, lots' outcomes are divinely determined. The proverb asserts God's sovereignty even over seemingly chance events. Nothing is random to God. While Christians don't use lots today (having the Spirit's guidance), the principle remains—God sovereignly governs all outcomes, even apparent randomness.

Historical Context

Ancient Israel used lots for various decisions: dividing land (Joshua 18:10), selecting Saul as king (1 Samuel 10:20-21), determining guilt (Joshua 7:14, Jonah 1:7), assigning temple duties (1 Chronicles 24:5), choosing Judas' replacement (Acts 1:26). This wasn't superstition but recognition that God controlled outcomes (Proverbs 16:9). After Pentecost, the Spirit guided directly, making lots unnecessary. Yet God's sovereignty over all events remains constant.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing God's sovereignty over seemingly random events affect your view of 'luck' or 'chance'?
2. In what situations are you tempted to think outcomes are random rather than divinely governed?
3. How should God's sovereignty over all things shape your trust and peace amid uncertainty?

Interlinear Text

כָּל מִיהִיא הַגּוֹן לְאַת יָמַר לְבָבְךָ
into the lap is cast The lot thereof is of the LORD

H2436 H2904 H853 H1486 H3068 H3605

מִשְׁפָטָיו:

but the whole disposing

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Additional Cross-References

Acts 1:26 (Parallel theme): And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Proverbs 18:18 (Parallel theme): The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty.

Nehemiah 11:1 (Parallel theme): And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities.

Jonah 1:7 (Parallel theme): And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

Proverbs 29:26 (References Lord): Many seek the ruler's favour; but every man's judgment cometh from the LORD.

Joshua 18:10 (References Lord): And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.

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