

Proverbs 17:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.

Analysis

Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house. Meshiv ra'ah tachat tovaḥ (מְשִׁיב רָעָה תַּחַת טוֹבָה, returning evil instead of good). Responding to kindness with wickedness is particularly heinous. Lo-tamush ra'ah mibeytho (לֹא-תִמָּוֶשׁ רָעָה מִבֵּיתוֹ, evil will not depart from his house). Such ingratitude curses entire households. The proverb teaches that repaying good with evil invokes persistent divine judgment. Absalom's rebellion against David who showed him mercy brought death (2 Samuel 18). Nabal's churlishness toward David nearly destroyed his house (1 Samuel 25). Christians must overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).

Historical Context

Ancient honor cultures valued reciprocity—returning good for good, honoring benefactors. Repaying kindness with cruelty was among the worst offenses. Biblical examples include: Joseph's brothers repaying Jacob's love with selling Joseph (Genesis 37), Saul repaying David's service with murderous pursuit (1 Samuel 19-26), Judas betraying Jesus despite years of kindness (Matthew 26:47-50). Such ingratitude brought severe consequences.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Have you ever repaid someone's goodness with evil, and what were the consequences?
2. How does recognizing God's incredible goodness toward us in Christ motivate grateful, generous living?
3. What does overcoming evil with good (Romans 12:21) look like when others repay your kindness with wickedness?

Interlinear Text

מִשֵּׁ יֵב	כָּ עָ ה	תַּ חַת	טוֹבָ ה	לֹא	תָמ יֵשׁ	כָּ עָ ה
Whoso rewardeth	evil	H8478	for good	H3808	shall not depart	evil
H7725	H7451		H2896		H4185	H7451

מִבֵּיתוֹ:
from his house
H1004

Additional Cross-References

Romans 12:17 (Evil): Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

Psalms 35:12 (Evil): They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.

1 Peter 3:9 (Evil): Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

Psalms 38:20 (Evil): They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is.

1 Samuel 24:17 (Evil): And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

2 Samuel 12:10 (Parallel theme): Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

Matthew 27:5 (Parallel theme): And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 (Evil): See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.