

Proverbs 17:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity.

Analysis

Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity. Punishing the righteous (tsaddiq, צַדִּיק) is wrong—lo-tov, לֹא-טוֹב, not good). Striking (hakkot, הַכּוֹת, to strike, smite, beat) nobles (nedivim, נְדִיבִים, princes, nobles, generous ones) for (al, עַל, on account of, because of) yosher (יְשָׁרָם, uprightness, equity) is equally wrong. This proverb condemns perverting justice by punishing good people. Whether targeting the righteous generally or nobles specifically for doing right, both are condemned. God judges such injustice severely. Christ endured ultimate injustice—punished though perfectly righteous (1 Peter 2:22-23).

Historical Context

Throughout history, righteous people faced unjust punishment. Prophets were imprisoned or killed for truth-telling (Jeremiah 20:1-2, 37:15, Matthew 23:29-31). John the Baptist was beheaded for confronting Herod (Matthew 14:3-12). Jesus was crucified though Pilate found no fault (Luke 23:13-15). Early Christians faced persecution for righteousness (Acts 4:1-3, 5:17-18). This proverb condemns such injustice, promising divine vindication for the unjustly punished.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Have you ever punished or criticized someone for doing what is right?
2. How should Christians respond when punished unjustly for righteousness (1 Peter 2:19-23, 4:12-16)?
3. In what ways does Christ's unjust punishment secure our justification and empower patient endurance of persecution?

Interlinear Text

עַל גְּדִיבֵי מִן לְפָכָת וְתִּשְׁפַּת עַנְוֹת וְשָׁגַב
H1571 Also to punish the just H3808 is not good H2896 nor to strike H5221 princes H5921
H6064 H6662 H2896 H5081

שְׁפָרָת:
for equity
H3476

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 17:15 (Righteousness): He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.

Proverbs 18:5 (Righteousness): It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

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