

Proverbs 17:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

Analysis

Mocking the poor 'reproacheth his Maker,' for God created all people in His image. The Hebrew 'charak' (reproach/scorn) means to defame or insult. To despise those made in God's image is to insult God Himself. Similarly, 'he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.' Schadenfreude—delight in others' misfortune—is sin. Reformed theology's doctrine of the imago Dei establishes human dignity regardless of economic status. The poor deserve respect and compassion because they bear God's image. This verse grounds social ethics in theology.

Historical Context

Ancient societies typically viewed poverty as divine curse and wealth as blessing. This proverb counters that view, insisting that the poor remain image-bearers deserving dignity and that mocking them offends their Creator.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Do you view and treat the poor as image-bearers of God?

2. In what subtle ways might you show contempt for those of lower economic status?
3. How should the doctrine of imago Dei shape your economic ethics and generosity?

Interlinear Text

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|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| לְעֵגֶל | לְרַשָּׁה | רַחֲרַחַת | עֵשֶׂה הָוֶה | שָׁמֵן | לְאֵידָה |
| Whoso mocketh | the poor | reproacheth | his Maker | and he that is glad | at calamities |
| H3932 | H7326 | H2778 | H6213 | H8056 | H343 |

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| לֹא | וְנִקְרַת |
| H3808 | shall not be unpunished |
| H5352 | |

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 14:31 (Parallel theme): He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

Job 31:29 (Parallel theme): If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him:

Proverbs 16:5 (Parallel theme): Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

1 John 3:17 (Parallel theme): But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

Proverbs 14:21 (Parallel theme): He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.

Romans 12:15 (Parallel theme): Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.