

Proverbs 18:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt, and with ignominy reproach.

Analysis

Wickedness brings contempt, and 'with ignominy cometh reproach.' The progression is instructive: 'wicked' (Hebrew 'rasha'—guilty, ungodly) leads to 'contempt' (Hebrew 'buz'—scorn), 'ignominy' (Hebrew 'qalon'—dishonor), and 'reproach' (Hebrew 'cherpah'—shame). Sin compounds its own consequences. Reformed theology's understanding of sin's deceitfulness shows how wickedness snowballs—each sin making the next easier and consequences more severe. The wicked person eventually becomes an object of universal scorn. This warns against sin's first steps, knowing where they inevitably lead.

Historical Context

In honor-shame cultures like ancient Israel, public disgrace was one of the worst fates imaginable. The wicked's descent into universal contempt served as a powerful deterrent to covenant unfaithfulness.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Can you trace sin's progressive nature in your own life—small compromises leading to greater problems?
2. How does understanding sin's snowball effect help you resist 'small' temptations?
3. What does repentance look like when you recognize yourself on this downward trajectory?

Interlinear Text

בָּ א	כִּי שָׁע	בָּ א	גַּם	בְּ זֹ	וְעַם	וְלִי וְ
cometh	When the wicked	cometh	H1571	also contempt	H5973	and with ignominy
H935	H7563	H935		H937		H7036

חֲרָפָה:
reproach
H2781

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 22:10 (Parallel theme): Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

Proverbs 11:2 (Parallel theme): When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

1 Peter 4:14 (Evil): If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.