

Proverbs 20:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy.

Analysis

God's covenant love ('mercy and truth') preserves the king's person and authority. 'Mercy' (chesed) is God's steadfast covenant faithfulness; 'truth' (emet) is His reliability and faithfulness. Together they form the foundation of just rule. The king who governs according to these attributes—showing mercy to the vulnerable and upholding truth in justice—will have a secure throne. This connects political stability to moral character and divine blessing. Conversely, rulers who practice injustice invite instability and judgment. The principle applies beyond kings to all in authority: leadership endures through righteousness, not might. Ultimately, Christ's throne is established forever because He perfectly embodies mercy and truth.

Historical Context

Israel's monarchy was conditional—kings who followed God's law prospered, while those who abandoned it faced judgment. The Davidic covenant promised an eternal throne fulfilled in Christ.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do you exercise any authority you have—with mercy and truth, or with selfish harshness?
2. In what ways does Christ perfectly embody the mercy and truth that preserve His eternal throne?

Interlinear Text

תְּדַבֵּר	בְּתָהָרָת	אֶתְמָתָה	וְאֶתְמָתָה	יִצְרָא	לְנָסָתָה	מִלְּנָסָתָה	וְעַלְמָתָה	בְּתָהָרָת	תְּדַבֵּר	בְּתָהָרָת	גְּדֹאָה
Mercy	and truth	preserve	the king	is upholden			Mercy	and his throne			
H2617	H571	H5341	H4428	H5582			H2617	H3678			

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 16:12 (Kingdom): It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness.

Proverbs 29:14 (Kingdom): The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.

Psalms 101:1 (Grace): I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.

Psalms 26:1 (Parallel theme): Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.

Proverbs 16:6 (Grace): By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.

Psalms 21:7 (Grace): For the king trusteth in the LORD, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.