

Proverbs 21:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

Analysis

The righteous find joy in doing justice—administering fairness, defending the oppressed, and upholding truth. What delights the godly person terrifies the wicked, whose 'destruction' comes through justice's execution. This reveals opposite moral orientations: the righteous love what God loves; the wicked hate it. Justice is not merely external conformity but reflects transformed desires. The regenerate heart delights in righteousness because it's been conformed to God's character. Conversely, evildoers recognize that justice threatens their wickedness. This verse provides a diagnostic: what brings you joy reveals your heart's condition. Those who love mercy, justice, and truth demonstrate spiritual life; those who hate these things remain dead in sin.

Historical Context

Israel's prophets constantly called for justice for widows, orphans, and the oppressed. Those who perverted justice faced divine judgment, while those who practiced it received blessing.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Do you delight in seeing justice done, or does it feel burdensome?
2. What does your response to calls for righteousness and justice reveal about your heart?

Interlinear Text

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|------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| שְׂמֵחָ הַ | לַ צְדִיק | עֲשֵׂה וְ | מִשְׁפָּט | וּ מְחִתָּה | לִפְ עָלֵי |
| It is joy | to the just | to do | judgment | but destruction | shall be to the workers |
| H8057 | H6662 | H6213 | H4941 | H4288 | H6466 |

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| אַיִן: |
| of iniquity |
| H205 |

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 10:29 (Sin): The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

Matthew 7:23 (Sin): And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Isaiah 64:5 (Righteousness): Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.

Ecclesiastes 3:12 (Parallel theme): I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.