

Proverbs 21:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth
speaketh constantly.

Analysis

A false witness—one who testifies dishonestly—'shall perish,' facing both temporal and eternal judgment. This person's deception has consequences not merely for others but for himself. Conversely, 'the man that heareth'—the one who listens carefully and speaks truthfully based on genuine knowledge—'speaketh constantly,' his testimony enduring and proving reliable. Truth stands; lies collapse. God will vindicate truthful witnesses and judge false ones. This applies beyond courtrooms to all speech: those who speak truth build reputations for reliability, while liars destroy their credibility. Ultimately, every word will be judged (Matthew 12:36-37). Believers must be people whose word can be trusted absolutely.

Historical Context

Israelite law prescribed severe penalties for false witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:16-21). Justice depended on reliable testimony, making perjury a community-destroying sin.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Is your word reliable, or do you shade truth for convenience or advantage?
2. How seriously do you take the ninth commandment's requirement of truthful speech?

Interlinear Text

עֵד	כֹּזֵב יֵם	יָאֵב ד	וְאִישׁ	שׁ וְיֵמ ע	לִנְצַח	יֹדְבֵר:
witness	A false	shall perish	but the man	that heareth	constantly	speaketh
H5707	H3577	H6	H376	H8085	H5331	H1696

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 19:5 (Witness): A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.

2 Corinthians 4:13 (Parallel theme): We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

Proverbs 19:9 (Witness): A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.