

Proverbs 24:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.

Analysis

This proverb describes the wicked's hopeless end. 'For there shall be no reward to the evil man' כִּי לֹא-תִּהְיֶה אָכָרִית לְעָבָד (ki lo-tihyeh acharit l'avod) for there will be no future/end for the evil person) uses אָכָרִית (acharit, end/outcome/future) indicating no hope beyond death. The wicked face eternal judgment, not reward. 'The candle of the wicked shall be put out' נֵר רְשָׁעִים יִדְעַר (ner resha'im yid'akh, the lamp of the wicked will be extinguished) uses light as metaphor for life and prosperity. Job used similar imagery: 'the light of the wicked shall be put out' (Job 18:5). The wicked may prosper temporarily, but their light will be extinguished—life ended, legacy forgotten, joy terminated. This contrasts with the righteous: 'the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day' (Proverbs 4:18). Christ is the ultimate 'light of the world' (John 8:12), and believers are 'the light of the world' (Matthew 5:14).

Historical Context

Ancient lamps provided essential light in homes without modern illumination. A extinguished lamp meant darkness, danger, and inability to function. Thus 'lamp' symbolized life, prosperity, and legacy throughout Scripture. Job lamented: 'when his candle shined upon my head' (Job 29:3), recalling better days. Conversely, the wicked's lamp being put out depicted judgment: Babylon's lamp would cease (Jeremiah 25:10). Edom's lamp would be extinguished (Obadiah 1:18). In the New Testament, Jesus used lamp imagery in parables—the wise virgins kept oil; foolish ones ran out (Matthew 25:1-13). Revelation depicts churches as lampstands that

Christ threatens to remove if they don't repent (Revelation 2:5). The new Jerusalem needs no lamp because God's glory illuminates it (Revelation 21:23). The righteous will shine 'as the stars for ever and ever' (Daniel 12:3); the wicked face darkness—hell, separation from God's light.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What legacy are you building—a lamp that shines into eternity or one that will be extinguished?
2. How does understanding that the wicked face hopeless ends change your perspective on their apparent prosperity?
3. Are you living in the light of Christ, or in darkness destined for extinguishing?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	כִּי	תַּחֲווּ	הַ	אַחֲרֵי	יְתָ	לְכַעַד	נָרָ
H3588	H3808	H1961				H7451	H5216
For	there	shall	be	no	reward	to	the
						evil	man
							the
							candle

רָשָׁעַ יְמִינָה:
of the wicked shall be put out

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 13:9 (Evil): The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

Psalms 11:6 (Evil): Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.

Job 21:17 (Evil): How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger.

Proverbs 20:20 (Parallel theme): Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.

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