

Proverbs 28:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

Analysis

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination—Willful rejection of torah (God's instruction) renders one's tefillah (prayer) into to'evah (abomination, detestable thing). This shocking verdict reveals that liturgy divorced from obedience offends God.

The principle echoes Isaiah 1:15: 'When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you... your hands are full of blood.' Psalm 66:18: 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' The relationship is covenantal—those who **turn away the ear** from God's word cannot expect Him to incline His ear to their petitions. 1 John 3:22 confirms: 'Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments.'

Historical Context

Israel's prophets consistently condemned empty ritualism—sacrifices and prayers offered while disobeying covenant stipulations (Amos 5:21-24, Micah 6:6-8). Post-exilic Judaism sometimes fell into formalism that Jesus also confronted (Matthew 15:8-9). Authentic worship requires heart obedience.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. Are there areas of disobedience in your life that might be hindering your prayers?
2. How does habitual exposure to Scripture shape the authenticity of your prayer life?
3. What does it mean to 'hear the law' versus merely listen to it?

Interlinear Text

מָס יָר	אָ זָנוּ	מִשְׁמַע	תּוֹרָה	גַּם	תְּפִלַּתוֹ
He that turneth away	his ear	from hearing	the law	H1571	even his prayer
H5493	H241	H8085	H8451		H8605

תּוֹעֵבָה:

shall be abomination
H8441

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 66:18 (Parallel theme): If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

Psalms 109:7 (Prayer): When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin.

Proverbs 15:8 (Prayer): The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

Proverbs 21:13 (Parallel theme): Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.