

Proverbs 6:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

Analysis

Poverty comes as a traveler and want as an armed man - the consequences of sloth arrive inevitably and forcefully. The Hebrew 'mehalak' (traveler/wayfarer) suggests steady approach, while 'magen' (armed man/warrior) indicates forceful arrival. Poverty doesn't come violently but arrives inexorably. The fool doesn't see it coming because decline is gradual. When recognized, it's too late - poverty arrives with warrior's force, difficult to resist.

Historical Context

Ancient economy lacked modern safety nets - no unemployment insurance, welfare, or social security. Laziness produced genuine destitution. While we should compassionately help the poor (many poor through no fault of their own), Proverbs here addresses preventable poverty resulting from laziness. Paul echoes this: 'If any would not work, neither should he eat' (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What poverty (financial, relational, spiritual) is approaching due to present neglect?
2. How can you recognize decline before crisis forces change?
3. What immediate action would alter your trajectory from approaching want?

Interlinear Text

כִּאֵין יְהוָה בְּאָתֶךְ

come as one that travelleth So shall thy poverty and thy want man

H935

H1980

H7389

H4270

H376

מַטֵּל:

as an armed

H4043

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 13:4 (Parallel theme): The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

Proverbs 20:4 (Parallel theme): The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

Proverbs 10:4 (Parallel theme): He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

Proverbs 24:34 (Parallel theme): So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.