

Proverbs 8:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

Analysis

By wisdom kings reign and rulers decree justice. The Hebrew 'malak' (reign/rule) and 'chaqqaq' (decree/inscribe) describe governmental authority. Political power exercised wisely produces just government. Conversely, foolish rulers produce unjust governance. This verse establishes that legitimate political authority derives from wisdom, ultimately from God. Romans 13:1 teaches: 'There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.' Righteous governance reflects divine wisdom.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern kings often claimed divine approval or descent. Israel's distinctive teaching was that legitimate authority required moral alignment with Yahweh's wisdom, not merely claimed divine status. Samuel's criticism of Saul, Nathan's confrontation of David, prophets' condemnation of wicked kings - all demonstrated that authority without wisdom forfeits legitimacy. Daniel 2:21 affirms God 'removeth kings, and setteth up kings.'

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How should recognition that authority derives from divine wisdom affect your view of government?
2. What responsibilities do you have to promote wise governance in your sphere of influence?
3. How do you respond to governing authorities who lack wisdom or oppose God's standards?

Interlinear Text

אָזְקָה: אֵת קְרָבָה | רְגָנָם יְמִינָלְכָה מֶלֶךְ יְמִינָבָה
By me kings reign and princes decree justice
H4428 H4427 H7336 H2710 H6664

Additional Cross-References

Romans 13:1 (Parallel theme): Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Daniel 2:21 (Kingdom): And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

Matthew 28:18 (Parallel theme): And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Revelation 19:16 (Kingdom): And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Daniel 4:32 (Kingdom): And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.