

Longevity Denied to the Wicked

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Longevity Enjoyed by the Wicked (Job 21:7-8; Ps. 17:14; Eccl. 8:12; Isa. 65:20).

Longevity Denied to the Wicked (Job 36:14; Ps. 55:23; Prov. 10:27; Eccl. 7:17; 8:13).

As the length of every human being's life is very short, in comparison to the people who lived before Noah's flood, longevity is a relative term which can be debated endlessly (cf. Gen. 5:27). Suffice it to say, whether a person lives forty years or eighty, both have lived a short time when compared to the age of the universe (Job 14:2; Ps. 78:39; 144:4; Jas. 4:14). Therefore when the term longevity is applied to God's obedient servants, more often than not it refers to their resurrection from the dead at Christ's return (1Cor. 15:50-57; 1Thes. 4:13-17). When this occurs, they will inherit everlasting life in God's kingdom (Jn. 14:3; 17:24; Rev. 2:26-28; 3:12, 21).

The fact that God "sends rain upon the just and unjust" explains why some wicked people appear to live longer than the victims of their crimes would like them to (Mt. 5:44-45). This may seem unfair from a human perspective, but God allows time for everyone to either reap what they sow, or preferably repent of their sins. Both these alternatives require time and God provides this as He sees fit. Therefore, the scriptures regarding longevity for the wicked need to be viewed from God's point of view (see study: Reward and Punishment to Be Bestowed in the Next World).

With these points in mind the scriptures, that supposedly contradict the fact that God often grants plenty of time for the wicked to repent or reap the consequences of their evil deeds, will be examined. In the first example, some wrongdoers are referred to in the Hebrew language as "qedeshim", which describes them as "practicing sodomy or prostitution in religious rituals." Therefore if they die in their youth, as opposed to old age, it would be related to some disease that was contracted through their licentious activities (cf. Rom. 1:27). So these persons reaped the consequences of their sin,

They die in their youth, and their life ends among the perverted persons (Heb. *qedeshim*) (Job 36:14; Ed. note in parenthesis; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

The next scripture that is supposed to be contradictory is dealing with bloodthirsty men. Jesus Christ warned people during his earthly ministry that if they lived by the sword, they would die by it (Mt. 26:52; cf. Prov. 21:7). In other words, those who are prone to solve problems through violence are much more likely to reap violence in return, and this is one way to shorten a life,

But You, O God, shall bring them down to the pit of destruction; **bloodthirsty** and deceitful **men shall not live out half their days**; but I will trust in You (Ps. 55:23; emphasis added).

The next scripture is a brief commentary on the fact that some wicked people “throw caution to the wind” in their pride and arrogance, while those who are respectful toward God are not likely to place themselves in precarious situations that could result in loss of life (cf. Mt. 4:5-7),

The fear of the Lord prolongs days, but (in contrast) the years of the wicked will be shortened (through their own foolish and risky behavior) (Prov. 10:27; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In the past three scriptures, the wicked shortened their lives as a result of their own actions. Therefore they “reaped what they sowed” and tempted God in the process. It is very interesting in the next scripture, that is supposed to be contradictory, it actually confirms the points that have just been made regarding “cause and effect” for wicked and foolish behavior,

Do not be overly wicked, nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time? (Eccl. 7:17).

The last scripture, that some claim is contradictory, is dealing with two issues. The first is the eternal well-being of the wicked, followed by their physical well-being. In order to understand this correctly, the verse prior to the apparent contradiction must be included. Also, it is important to point out that Holy Scripture was originally recorded without chapters and verses. These were added later by copyists and translators as various versions and translations of the Bible were made over time,

(1st issue) Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I (Solomon) surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him (show deep respect toward God and His word). ¹³But it will not be well with the wicked; (2nd issue) **nor will he prolong his days**, which are a shadow, **because he does not fear before God** (Eccl. 8:12-13; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So the first issue above is dealing with sinners who have no future life unless they repent for the sins they have committed. If they refuse to repent for breaking God’s law and commandments, either during their physical life or when they are resurrected at the end of Christ’s millennial rule (cf. Rev. 20:4-6), they will not inherit everlasting life. The second issue is the same as the one mentioned previously in Proverbs 10:27, which has to do with throwing caution to the wind and tempting God. The more arrogant or proud someone is, the more likely they are to put their life at risk,

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty (proud) spirit before a fall (Prov. 16:18; cf. 10:8, 10:11:5; 24:16; 28:10, 14, 18; 29:16; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In conclusion, no contradictions exist between any of the scriptures in the heading of this study. Instead, some wicked people enjoy a long life because God has allowed them time to learn that their way of living is harmful to themselves as well as others who are affected by their evil behavior. So the purpose for their longevity is tied directly to God’s patience and mercy in the hope they will repent of their sins (cf. 2Pet. 3:9). In the case of wicked not enjoying longevity, it is due to their pride and foolishness resulting in a premature death.

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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