

Job 11:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away:

Analysis

Zophar promises Job will 'forget' (תִשְׁכַח, tishkach) his misery (עֲמָל, amal—toil, trouble), remembering it only 'as waters that pass away' (מֵימָן עַבְרוֹ, mayim avru). The imagery suggests suffering becoming like floodwaters that recede, leaving only a memory. This contains truth—God does heal and restore (Revelation 21:4, Isaiah 65:17). However, Zophar's timeline is wrong; he promises immediate relief upon repentance. The reality is more complex: God does eventually wipe away all tears, but often through suffering, not around it. Job's restoration comes in God's timing, not according to Zophar's formula. The Reformed doctrine of providence affirms God's good purposes work through, not despite, our afflictions.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom often promised quick relief for the repentant. The book of Job subverts this prosperity gospel by showing that God's ways are more mysterious and His purposes deeper than simple cause-and-effect.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do we balance hope for relief with patient endurance when suffering continues?
2. What false timelines do we impose on God's promises?

Interlinear Text

עָבֵר יְמִינְךָ כַּמֵּן מִים
H3588 H859 thy misery Because thou shalt forget it as waters that pass away
H5999 H7911 H4325 H5674

תִּזְכֶּר:

and remember

H2142

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 65:16 (Parallel theme): That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.

Ecclesiastes 5:20 (Parallel theme): For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.

John 16:21 (Parallel theme): A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

Isaiah 54:4 (Parallel theme): Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

Isaiah 54:9 (Parallel theme): For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

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