

Job 11:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.

Analysis

Zophar concludes with warning: 'the eyes of the wicked shall fail' (תִּכְלֶנָה, tikhlenah—be consumed, perish), 'they shall not escape' (אָבַד מָנוֹס, avad manos—refuge perishes), and 'their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost' (מָפַח-נֶפֶשׁ, mapach-nefesh—breathing out of soul, death). This orthodox warning echoes Psalm 112:10 and Proverbs 10:28. The 'giving up of the ghost' is a stark image—their hope expires like a dying breath. The theology is sound: the wicked ultimately perish. The implication against Job is false: Zophar suggests Job faces this fate unless he repents of unspecified sins. He uses the doctrine of judgment as a weapon. Biblical warnings about judgment should drive us to Christ, not be deployed against fellow sufferers.

Historical Context

Ancient Israelite theology clearly distinguished the fate of the righteous and wicked. Zophar stands in this tradition but misapplies it, placing Job in the category of 'the wicked' based solely on his suffering.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do we proclaim the reality of divine judgment without presuming to know who falls under it?
2. What is the difference between biblical warning and spiritual manipulation through fear?

Interlinear Text

וְעֵינָי י	רָשָׁעִים	תִּכְלֹךְ יָנָהּ	וּמָנוֹס	אֲבָד
But the eyes	of the wicked	shall fail	H4498	and they shall not escape
H5869	H7563	H3615		H6
מִן הַמָּוֶת	וְתִקְוָתָם	מִפֶּחַ	נֶפֶשׁ:	
H4480	and their hope	shall be as the giving up	of the ghost	
	H8615	H4646	H5315	

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 28:65 (Parallel theme): And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:

Job 31:16 (Parallel theme): If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;

Job 17:5 (Parallel theme): He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail.