

Job 12:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.

Analysis

'With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.' Job affirms God possesses both 'strength' (עֹז, *oz*—might, power) and 'wisdom' (תְּשׁוּבָה, *tushiyah*—sound wisdom, abiding success). But shockingly, both 'deceived' (שָׁגָה, *shogeg*—erring one) and 'deceiver' (מַשְׁגֵּה, *mashgeh*—one causing error) belong to God—are under His sovereignty. This isn't affirming moral equivalence but asserting comprehensive divine control. God's purposes incorporate even deception and error (1 Kings 22:19-23, 2 Thessalonians 2:11). This demonstrates sovereignty beyond simplistic moralism. The Reformed doctrine of providence affirms God ordains whatsoever comes to pass, including evil, without being evil's author. This mystery troubles those demanding simple answers.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern theodicy struggled with divine sovereignty over evil. Job here boldly asserts what later Reformed theology would systematize: God's sovereign control extends even over deception, without making God a deceiver.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do we affirm God's sovereignty over all things without making Him the author of evil?
2. What comfort exists in knowing even deception and error ultimately serve God's purposes?

Interlinear Text

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| עִמּוֹ | עִזְ | וְתוֹשִׁיָּהּ | לִי | שֶׁגֶר | וּמְשַׁגֵּה: |
| H5973 | With him is strength | and wisdom | H0 | the deceived | and the deceiver |
| | H5797 | H8454 | | H7683 | H7686 |

Additional Cross-References

Job 13:9 (Parallel theme): Is it good that he should search you out? or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him?

Ezekiel 14:9 (Parallel theme): And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.