

Job 12:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged.

Analysis

God removes speech from the trusted and takes away understanding from the aged. The Hebrew 'aman' (trusted/reliable ones) and 'zagen' (elders) represented society's most authoritative voices. Job argues that God can and does remove discernment even from those whom society trusts most. This cuts against the friends' confidence in traditional wisdom—age and reputation don't guarantee truth when God withdraws insight.

Historical Context

Ancient cultures venerated the elderly as repositories of wisdom (the basis for councils of elders). Job's claim that God can remove their understanding challenges cultural assumptions about automatic wisdom through age and experience.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do we balance respecting elders with recognizing that age doesn't guarantee wisdom?
2. When has trust in someone's reputation or experience led to accepting error?
3. What role does God's active work play in granting or withholding spiritual discernment?

Interlinear Text

מִס יֵר	שֵׁ פֶה	לְנֶאֱמָנִים	וְט עֵם	זִקְנֵי יָם
He removeth away	the speech	of the trusty	the understanding	of the aged
H5493	H8193	H539	H2940	H2205
:קָח!				
and taketh away				
H3947				

Additional Cross-References

Job 32:9 (Parallel theme): Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.

Job 17:4 (Parallel theme): For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt them.