

Job 15:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

Analysis

Eliphaz asks: 'What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?' The question echoes Eliphaz's earlier speech (4:17) and anticipates Bildad (25:4). Tahor (טָהוֹר, clean) means pure or undefiled. Tsadaq (צָדִיק, righteous) means just or vindicated. Eliphaz correctly identifies universal sinfulness but wrongly applies it—affirming general human depravity doesn't prove Job's specific guilt. The doctrine of original sin is true but doesn't require confessing imaginary particular sins.

Historical Context

The question reflects biblical teaching about universal sinfulness (Psalm 51:5, Romans 3:23). Ancient wisdom recognized human moral corruption. Eliphaz's theology is orthodox but his application is flawed—he uses the doctrine of universal sin to silence Job's specific protests of innocence regarding his friends' accusations. This demonstrates how sound doctrine can be weaponized against individuals.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do we affirm universal human sinfulness without falsely accusing individuals of specific sins?
2. What is the difference between acknowledging our general unworthiness and confessing particular transgressions we haven't committed?

Interlinear Text

מָה	אִם וְשׁ	כִּי	יִזְכֶּה ה'	וְכִי	אֶצִּיץ ק'
H4100	What is man	H3588	that he should be clean	H3588	that he should be righteous
	H582		H2135		H6663
	וְלֹד	אִשָּׁה:			
	and he which is born	of a woman			
	H3205	H802			

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 7:20 (Righteousness): For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Job 14:4 (Parallel theme): Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

Proverbs 20:9 (Parallel theme): Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

Romans 7:18 (Parallel theme): For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Psalms 14:3 (Parallel theme): They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

1 Kings 8:46 (Parallel theme): If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near;

