

Job 15:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor.

Analysis

'The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor.' Eliphaz describes the wicked's inner torment: 'travaileth with pain' (מִתְחַלֵּל, mitcholel—writhes, anguishes) 'all his days' (כָּל־יְמֵי, kol-yemey rasha). Years are 'hidden' (נִסְתָּפְנוּ, nitsf'nu—concealed, stored up) for 'the oppressor' (לְעָרִץ, le'arits—tyrant, ruthless one). The theology is partially true: sin does create inner torment (Proverbs 13:15, Romans 2:9). However, Eliphaz applies this to Job, implying Job's suffering proves wickedness. The error: assuming all suffering indicates secret sin. Jesus explicitly refutes this (John 9:2-3, Luke 13:1-5). Eliphaz describes a real phenomenon but misdiagnoses Job's situation.

Historical Context

Ancient wisdom recognized that wickedness creates anxiety and fear of judgment. Eliphaz stands in this tradition but wrongly applies it, making Job's suffering evidence of hidden evil.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How do we acknowledge sin's natural consequences without assuming all suffering results from personal sin?
2. What is the relationship between conscience and suffering?

Interlinear Text

כָּל	יָמָיו	בְּשָׁעָה	הוּא	מְתַחֵל ל	וּמִסְפַּר
H3605	with pain all his days	The wicked	H1931	man travaileth	and the number
	H3117	H7563		H2342	H4557
שָׁנָיו	נִצְפָּנוּ וְ	לְעֹרֵיץ:			
of years	is hidden	to the oppressor			
H8141	H6845	H6184			

Additional Cross-References

Job 27:13 (Evil): This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty.

Job 24:1 (Parallel theme): Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?