

Job 17:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore
shalt thou not exalt them.

Analysis

For thou hast hid their heart from understanding (כִּי־לִבָּם אֶפְנַת מִשְׁכָּל, ki-libbam tsafanta mi-sakel)—Job addresses God directly: tsafanta (you have hidden/concealed) indicates divine agency in his friends' blindness. Sakel (understanding/insight/wisdom) is the discernment they lack despite their verbose arguments. This echoes Isaiah 6:9-10 and anticipates Jesus's teaching on spiritual blindness (Matthew 13:13-15).

Therefore shalt thou not exalt them (עַל־קָן לֹא תְרוּמֵם, al-ken lo teromem)—Teromem (exalt, lift up) means vindication or honor. Job prophesies that God will not honor his friends' false theology—a prophecy fulfilled in 42:7-9 when God rebukes them and requires Job's intercession for their forgiveness.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom traditions valued elders and counselors as bearers of divine insight. Job's shocking claim—that God has hidden truth from these respected friends—overturns conventional authority. God's later vindication of Job (42:7) confirms that orthodoxy without compassion is spiritual blindness.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. When has religious certainty actually concealed truth rather than revealed it?
2. How do we discern between Spirit-given understanding and merely human religious wisdom?
3. What does Job 42:7 teach about God's priority: correct doctrine or honest wrestling?

Interlinear Text

בָּם	לְבַם	אַגְּנָתָךְ	מִשְׁכָּל	לְאַגְּנָתָךְ
H3588	their heart	For thou hast hid	from understanding	H5921
H3820		H6845	H7922	H3651
				H3808

:תְּרַמֵּם

therefore shalt thou not exalt

H7311

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 11:25 (Parallel theme): At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Matthew 13:11 (Parallel theme): He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

1 Corinthians 1:20 (Parallel theme): Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

2 Samuel 17:14 (Parallel theme): And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

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