

Job 20:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The heaven shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him.

Analysis

The heaven shall reveal his iniquity (יגלו שמים פֶּוֹנוֹ, yegallu shamayim avono)—galah means to uncover, reveal, or expose what was hidden. Heaven itself (shamayim) acts as prosecutor, revealing avon (iniquity, guilt, moral perversity). **The earth shall rise up against him** (וְאֶרֶץ מִתְקוֹמָמָה לוֹ, ve'erets mitqomamah lo)—qum means to arise or stand up, here in hostile witness. Creation itself testifies against the wicked.

This cosmic courtroom scene—heaven and earth as witnesses—echoes covenant lawsuit language (Deuteronomy 32:1, Isaiah 1:2, Micah 6:2). Zophar envisions total exposure: sins hidden from human eyes revealed by divine omniscience. Romans 2:16 affirms this: God judges the secrets of men. But Zophar presumes to know God's verdict before the trial, assuming Job stands condemned when God has declared him righteous (Job 1:8).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern treaty/covenant documents invoked heaven and earth as witnesses (Deuteronomy 4:26, 30:19, 31:28). These cosmic witnesses represented permanence and objectivity—unlike human testimony, they couldn't be bribed or intimidated. Zophar employs covenant lawsuit imagery, but ironically, God later conducts an actual lawsuit—against Zophar and his friends for misrepresenting Him (Job 42:7-8).

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the certainty of divine exposure of all secrets drive us to Christ who bore our sins' exposure?
2. What does it mean that creation itself participates in God's moral order and judgment?
3. How do we avoid Zophar's error of presuming to pronounce God's verdict before He speaks?

Interlinear Text

יְגַלֵּי ו	שָׁמַיִם יִם	עֲוֹנוֹ ו	אֶרֶץ ו	הַמִּתְקַדֵּם הָ	לֹא
shall reveal	The heaven	his iniquity	and the earth	shall rise up	H0
H1540	H8064	H5771	H776	H6965	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 26:21 (Sin): For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

Job 16:18 (Parallel theme): O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place.