

Job 20:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he?

Analysis

Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung (כִּגְלֵלוֹ לְנֶצַח יֵאָבֵד, keglelo lanetsach yoved)—Zophar delivers the book's most visceral, repulsive image: the wicked person perishes כִּגְלֵלוֹ (keglelo, 'like his dung/excrement'). The noun גָּלַל (galal) is animal dung, used for fuel but considered unclean. לְנֶצַח (lanetsach, 'forever, perpetually') intensifies the judgment: permanent rubbish.

They which have seen him shall say, Where is he? (וְאֵיךְ יֹאמְרוּ אֵי, ro'av yomru 'ayyo)—The wicked vanish so completely that witnesses ask אֵי ('ayyo, 'Where?')—an interrogative of absence. Zophar assumes Job's suffering proves him wicked, headed for oblivion. The irony: Job will be vindicated, remembered, and his words canonized, while Zophar's name means 'chirper'—insignificant noise.

Historical Context

The image of dung as worthlessness appears across Scripture. Paul considers his credentials 'dung' (σκύβαλον, skubalon) compared to knowing Christ (Philippians 3:8). Zophar weaponizes this metaphor against Job, but the book's resolution proves Zophar spoke 'dung'—his theology was the refuse, not Job's life.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Zophar's crude insult reveal the depths to which theological argumentation can sink?
2. When have you seen people use Scripture's vivid language to wound rather than heal?
3. What does it mean that Job's words were preserved as Scripture while Zophar's condemnation proved false?

Interlinear Text

כְּגִלְלוֹ	לְנֶצַח	יֵאָבֵד	רְאֵי יוֹ	יֹאמְרוּ
like his own dung	for ever	Yet he shall perish	they which have seen	him shall say
H1561	H5331	H6	H7200	H559
אַיִן				
Where				
H335				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 83:10 (Parallel theme): Which perished at En-dor: they became as dung for the earth.

Job 14:10 (Parallel theme): But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

1 Kings 14:10 (Parallel theme): Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone.

2 Kings 9:37 (Parallel theme): And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.

Job 4:20 (Parallel theme): They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.

Job 7:10 (Parallel theme): He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.

Job 8:18 (Parallel theme): If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee.

Jeremiah 8:2 (Parallel theme): And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth.

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