

Job 21:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.

Analysis

Their bull gendereth, and faileth not (שֹׁרוֹ יִבָּר וְלֹא יִגָּעַל, shoro ibbar velo yag'il)—Job continues describing wicked prosperity with agricultural imagery. The verb abar (עָבַר) means to impregnate or cover (the cow), while ga'al (גָּעַל) means to fail, abort, or miscarry. Perfect livestock reproduction represented divine blessing (Exodus 23:26, Deuteronomy 7:14).

Their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf (פָּרָתוֹ תִפְּלֵט וְלֹא תִשְׁכָּל, parato tephallet velo teshakkel)—Palet (פָּלֵט) means to give birth or bring forth, while shakol (שָׁכַל) means to miscarry or be bereaved. The wicked experience agricultural prosperity that ancient theology attributed to covenant faithfulness. Job systematically demonstrates that observable reality contradicts retribution theology. Livestock fertility, family prosperity (v. 8), and domestic security (v. 9) all belonged to the wicked, not just the righteous.

Historical Context

In the ancient agrarian economy, livestock fertility directly determined survival and prosperity. The Mosaic covenant promised fertile herds as blessing for obedience (Deuteronomy 28:4, 11) and barrenness as curse for disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:18). Job observes that the wicked enjoy covenant blessings despite lacking covenant faithfulness. This observation forced a more complex understanding of divine providence than simple retribution theology allowed.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do you process when people who mock God experience 'blessed' circumstances—successful careers, healthy families, financial prosperity?
2. What does this verse teach about the danger of using circumstances as the sole measure of divine favor?
3. How might temporal prosperity for the wicked serve God's purposes even while ultimate judgment remains certain?

Interlinear Text

שׁוֹרֹ	עֲבֹר	וְלֹא	יָגַעַל	תִּפְּלֵט	כִּי־תִכֹּתוּ	וְלֹא
Their bull	gendereth	H3808	and faileth	calveth	not their cow	H3808
H7794	H5674		H1602	H6403	H6510	

תִּשְׁכֹּלֶה:

and casteth not her calf

H7921

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 23:26 (Parallel theme): There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil.