

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 (שׂורו עָבֵר וְלֹא יָגַע), shoro ibbar velo yag'il)—Job continues describing wicked prosperity with agricultural imagery. The verb abar (עָבֵר) means to impregnate or cover (the cow), while ga'al (גָּאֵל) 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 (פָּרָתוֹתָן תִּפְלַט וְלֹא תָשַׁכֵּל), parato tephallet velo teshakkel)—Palet (פִּלְטָה) means to give birth or bring forth, while shakol (שַׁכֵּל) 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

Psalm 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

וְלֹא פָּר בַּת זָהָר תִּפְלֵל טַבָּע לְעֵבֶר שׂוֹר וְ
Their bull gendereth H3808 and faileth calveth not their cow H3808
H7794 H5674 H1602 H6403 H6510

תִּשְׁפַּל:

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.