

Job 22:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?

Analysis

And thou sayest, How doth God know? (אַתָּה תֹּאמֶר מַה־יְדָע אֱלֹהִים)—Eliphaz now accuses Job of practical atheism, claiming Job believes God is ignorant of human affairs. The verb yada (to know) implies intimate awareness and covenant relationship. Eliphaz falsely attributes to Job the wicked man's philosophy from Psalm 73:11, 94:7.

Can he judge through the dark cloud? (הַבָּעֵד עֲנָפָל וְשָׁפֹט)—Araphel (dark cloud/thick darkness) is the same word used for God's presence at Sinai (Exodus 20:21, Deuteronomy 4:11). Eliphaz twists this: Job supposedly thinks God's transcendence means distance and indifference. In reality, Job desperately wants God to judge his case (13:3, 23:3-7)—the opposite of what Eliphaz claims.

Historical Context

The question 'How doth God know?' appears in skeptical wisdom literature and psalms of the wicked. Ancient Israelite theology insisted on God's omniscience and justice (Psalm 139). Eliphaz weaponizes orthodox theology against Job by falsely associating him with the wicked man's worldview.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Eliphaz's false accusation illustrate the danger of attributing motives to suffering people without evidence?
2. What is the difference between questioning God (as Job does honestly) and denying God's knowledge (as Eliphaz accuses)?
3. How can orthodox theology become a weapon when used to judge rather than comfort the afflicted?

Interlinear Text

וְאַמְרָת	מִה	דִּעְ	אַל	בְּעֵד	עַרְפֵּל
And thou sayest	H4100	know	How doth God	H1157	through the dark cloud
H559	H3045		H410		H6205
שְׁפָט!					
can he judge					
H8199					

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 8:12 (Darkness): Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.

Psalms 10:11 (References God): He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.

Psalms 73:11 (References God): And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?

Isaiah 29:15 (Darkness): Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

Psalms 59:7 (Parallel theme): Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear?

Ezekiel 9:9 (Parallel theme): Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not.

Psalms 64:5 (Parallel theme): They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?

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