

Job 22:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood:

Analysis

Which were cut down out of time (אֲשֶׁר־קָמְטוּ לֹא־עָתָה) — Qummetu (cut down/seized) describes premature death; lo-et (not their time) emphasizes untimely destruction. Eliphaz clearly references the Flood generation (Genesis 6-7), whose lives were cut short by divine judgment.

Whose foundation was overflowed with a flood (יִסְׁוַחַם נָהָר יְצָקָה) — Yessodam (their foundation) represents life's stability; nahar yutsaq (river poured out) vividly pictures the waters overwhelming earth's foundations. Eliphaz uses the Flood as history's supreme example of retribution theology: total wickedness brought total destruction. The implication for Job is clear but false—your suffering proves you're like them. This ignores Genesis 6:9's crucial detail: 'Noah found grace,' proving the righteous sometimes suffer alongside the wicked without being guilty.

Historical Context

The Flood narrative was well-known in ancient Near Eastern literature (Gilgamesh Epic, Atrahasis). For Israelites, it represented God's justice against universal corruption. Eliphaz weaponizes this shared cultural memory to condemn Job, missing the Flood's actual lesson about grace (Noah) and God's patience (2 Peter 3:9).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Eliphaz's use of the Flood narrative ignore the key detail of Noah's righteousness being preserved through judgment?
2. What does this passage teach about the danger of proof-texting history to support predetermined theological conclusions?
3. How might God's purpose in suffering be completely different from what observers assume based on retribution theology?

Interlinear Text

אֲשֶׁר קָרְפָּת 1 לֹא עַת נָבָרְתָּ 7 עַל
H834 Which were cut down H7059 H3808 out of time H6256 H5104 H3332

: וְסִדְרֵי

whose foundation

H3247

Additional Cross-References

Job 15:32 (Parallel theme): It shall be accomplished before his time, and his branch shall not be green.

2 Peter 2:5 (Parallel theme): And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

Genesis 7:11 (Parallel theme): In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

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