

Job 22:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?

Analysis

Which said unto God, Depart from us (הַאֱמָרִים לָאֵל סוּר מִמֶּנּוּ)—Sur mimmennu (depart from us) represents willful rejection of God's authority. Eliphaz quotes the wicked man's defiant cry (compare Job 21:14, where Job quoted this same phrase—but as the wicked's words, not his own!).

What can the Almighty do for them? (וַיִּמְהַרְפֹּעַל שְׂדֵי לִמּוֹ)—This rhetorical question expresses practical atheism: God is irrelevant to our prosperity. Shaddai (Almighty) emphasizes God's power, making the dismissal more blasphemous. Crucially, Eliphaz has taken Job's quotation of the wicked out of context. Job cited this in chapter 21 to challenge retribution theology (the wicked prosper!), explicitly distancing himself from their philosophy (21:16). Eliphaz either hasn't listened or deliberately misrepresents Job's words.

Historical Context

The demand 'Depart from us' appears in wisdom literature as the ultimate expression of rebellion against God. Ancient Near Eastern thought recognized the connection between acknowledging deity and receiving blessing. To dismiss God was to invite curse—yet Job observed that the wicked often prospered despite this (21:7-13).

Romans 1:28 (References God): And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Matthew 8:34 (Parallel theme): And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

Matthew 8:29 (References God): And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

Malachi 3:14 (References God): Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?

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