

Job 22:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment?

Analysis

Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? (הֲמִיִּיר אֶתְּךָ יוֹכִיחֶךָ, hamiyir'atekha yokhichekha)—Eliphaz's rhetorical question drips with sarcasm. Yir'ah (יִרְאָה) means fear or reverence, while yakach (יָכַח) means reprove, correct, or enter into judgment. Eliphaz mockingly asks if God disciplines Job because of Job's piety—an absurd suggestion in Eliphaz's theology. His intended meaning: 'God certainly isn't punishing you because you're too righteous!'

Will he enter with thee into judgment? (יָבוֹא עִמָּךְ בַּמִּשְׁפָּט, yavo immekha bamishpat)—Mishpat (מִשְׁפָּט) means judgment, justice, or legal case. Eliphaz cannot imagine God prosecuting the righteous, so he concludes Job must be wicked. Ironically, Job has repeatedly demanded exactly this—to present his case in God's court (9:32-35, 13:3, 13:18-22, 23:3-7). Eliphaz's theology has no category for mystery or testing; suffering must equal punishment for sin.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern religion operated on strict reciprocity—divine beings rewarded righteousness and punished wickedness. Eliphaz articulates this view perfectly: God doesn't discipline the pious, therefore Job's suffering proves hidden sin. This theology couldn't accommodate the prologue's revelation (chapters 1-2) that Job's suffering results from testing, not punishment. The book's message partly aims to expand ancient Israel's understanding beyond simplistic retribution theology.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Eliphaz's inability to conceive of righteous suffering limit his understanding of God's purposes?
2. What does Job's desire to argue his case before God teach about honest faith versus the friends' presumption to defend God?
3. How do we avoid Eliphaz's error of assuming all suffering results from personal sin?

Interlinear Text

הָ, מִדָּא תִּבְרָ	יִכְיֶה גְ	יָב וְאֵ	עַ מִבְּרָ
thee for fear	Will he reprove	of thee will he enter	
H3374	H3198	H935	H5973

בְּמִשְׁפָּט:
with thee into judgment
H4941

Additional Cross-References

Job 14:3 (Judgment): And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?

Psalms 143:2 (Judgment): And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

Revelation 3:19 (Parallel theme): As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Psalms 76:6 (Parallel theme): At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.

Psalms 39:11 (Parallel theme): When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah.

Psalms 80:16 (Parallel theme): It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.

Job 34:23 (Judgment): For he will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God.

Job 7:12 (Parallel theme): Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?

Job 9:19 (Judgment): If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?

Job 19:29 (Judgment): Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.