

Job 22:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it.

Analysis

But as for the mighty man, he had the earth (וְאִישׁ זְרוֹעַ לוֹ הָאָרֶץ, ve'ish zero'a lo ha'arets)—Ish zero'a (אִישׁ זְרוֹעַ) literally means 'man of arm'—a powerful, influential person. Eliphaz accuses Job of favoring the powerful while oppressing the weak. The mighty 'had the earth'—possessed land, wealth, and influence through Job's partiality.

The honourable man dwelt in it (וּנְשׂוּא פָנִים יָשֵׁב בָּהּ, unsu phanim yesheb bah)—Nesu phanim (נְשׂוּא פָנִים) means literally 'lifted of face,' referring to someone shown favoritism or honored. Eliphaz charges Job with the sin of respect of persons—partiality forbidden in Scripture (Leviticus 19:15, Deuteronomy 16:19, James 2:1-9). This accusation directly contradicts Job's testimony that he championed the fatherless and broke the jaws of the wicked (29:12-17). Eliphaz's slander reveals how far theological certainty will go when protecting its system.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern law prohibited partiality in legal judgments. The Code of Hammurabi, though hierarchical, mandated justice even for lower classes. Mosaic law explicitly forbade favoring rich or poor (Exodus 23:3, Leviticus 19:15). Eliphaz's accusation suggests Job corrupted justice by favoring powerful landowners. The irony: Eliphaz himself shows partiality by presuming the wealthy sufferer must be guilty while giving the accuser benefit of the doubt.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do we guard against partiality—either favoring the powerful or romanticizing the poor?
2. What does Eliphaz's false accusation teach about how theological systems can blind us to actual evidence?
3. In what ways might we show 'respect of persons' in our churches, workplaces, or communities?

Interlinear Text

וְאִישׁ	זֶרְרוּעַ	לֹא	הָאֵרֶץ	וְאִישׁ וָאֵל
man	But as for the mighty	H0	he had the earth	and the honourable man
H376	H2220		H776	H5375
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יָמָיו	יָשָׁב	בָּהֶן		
H6440	dwelt	H0		
	H3427			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 9:15 (Parallel theme): The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.