

Job 33:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.

Analysis

Elihu corrects Job: 'Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.' The statement lo-tsadaqta (לֹא-צִדְקָת, thou art not just) charges Job with error. Elihu identifies Job's mistake: demanding God answer him as an equal. The phrase ki-yirbeh Eloha me-enosh (כִּי-ירְבֶּה אֱלֹהָי מְאֹנֹשׁ), God is greater than man) uses yirbeh (ירְבֶּה), meaning to be many, much, or great. Elihu argues that God's transcendence means He isn't obligated to explain Himself to creatures. While affirming divine sovereignty, Elihu may overreach—God does answer Job, suggesting divine condescension beyond what Elihu envisioned.

Historical Context

Elihu's correction addresses Job's demand that God answer him (23:3-5, 31:35). Ancient Near Eastern deities were often portrayed as capricious and unanswerable to humans. Elihu rightly emphasizes divine transcendence but may underestimate divine grace—God chooses to reveal Himself beyond strict obligation. The verse balances Job's presumption with theological truth about Creator-creature distinction.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do we balance the truth that God isn't obligated to explain Himself with the grace that He often does?
2. What does Elihu's correction teach about proper humility in approaching God while maintaining relationship?

Interlinear Text

Additional Cross-References

Job 36:5 (References God): Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom.

Ezekiel 18:25 (Parallel theme): Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?

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