

Job 33:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.

Analysis

That he may withdraw man from his purpose (lehāsîr 'ādām mimma'aśeh, לְהַסִּיר אָדָם מִמַּעֲשֵׂה) —Elihu describes God's corrective intervention through dreams and visions. The verb hāsîr means to turn aside, remove, or withdraw someone from a path. God's purpose in nocturnal revelation is preventative: to redirect humanity from destructive 'purpose' (ma'aśeh, deed or enterprise) before consequences unfold. This anticipates the redemptive warning system God employs throughout Scripture.

And hide pride from man (wegē'āwāh mē'enôš yekasseh, וְגַאֲוָה מֵאָנוֹשׁ יִכְסֶּה) —The verb kasah (to cover, conceal) suggests God actively shields humans from gē'āwāh (pride, arrogance). Pride leads to autonomous action apart from God, the root sin of Genesis 3. God's discipline through suffering or revelation 'covers' pride by exposing human frailty and dependence. Elihu's theology anticipates Proverbs 16:18: 'Pride goeth before destruction.' Divine correction is mercy that prevents the catastrophic harvest of unchecked pride.

Historical Context

This verse occurs in Elihu's first speech (Job 32-33), where he presents himself as mediator between Job and the three friends. Elihu argues that God speaks through dreams, visions, and suffering to correct and instruct. In ancient Near Eastern wisdom, dreams were recognized as divine communication (Genesis 20:3, 28:12, Daniel 2). Elihu introduces a pastoral theology of suffering absent from the friends'

retribution doctrine—God disciplines not merely to punish but to prevent greater harm.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God use difficult circumstances or conviction to 'withdraw' you from destructive paths you're pursuing?
2. In what ways does suffering expose and 'hide' pride by revealing your dependence on God rather than self-sufficiency?
3. How does this verse challenge the assumption that all hardship is punishment rather than preventative grace?

Interlinear Text

לְ הַסִּיר	אִם	מֵעֵשֶׂה	וְגוֹ	מִןּ	יִכְסֶה:
That he may withdraw	man	from his purpose	pride	from man	and hide
H5493	H120	H4639	H1466	H1397	H3680

Additional Cross-References

James 4:10 (Parallel theme): Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Isaiah 2:11 (Parallel theme): The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

Job 17:11 (Parallel theme): My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.

Matthew 27:19 (Parallel theme): When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

2 Corinthians 12:7 (Parallel theme): And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

Genesis 20:6 (Parallel theme): And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

2 Chronicles 32:25 (Parallel theme): But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.