

# Job 34:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.

## Analysis

**In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.** Elihu describes sudden divine judgment without human agency. "In a moment" (rega, רָגַע) means an instant, the blink of an eye—death comes without warning when God decrees it. "The people shall be troubled" (yegoa'u am, יִגְעֹשׁוּ אֶם) uses gua'ash (גַּעַשׁ), meaning to shake, quake, or be in turmoil. "At midnight" (chatsoth laylah, חֲצוֹת לַיְלָה) emphasizes the unexpectedness—death strikes when people feel most secure.

**The mighty shall be taken away without hand** (yusaru abbirim velo ve-yad, יוֹסְרוּ אַבְּרִיִּים וְלֹא בְיָד) is theologically crucial. Abbirim (אַבְּרִיִּים) are the powerful, strong, mighty ones who seem invincible. "Without hand" (lo ve-yad, לֹא בְיָד) means without human intervention—God needs no army, disease, or instrument to remove even the mightiest. This echoes Egypt's firstborn plague (Exodus 12:29, striking at midnight), Sennacherib's army destroyed by God's angel (2 Kings 19:35), and Belshazzar's death the night of Babylon's fall (Daniel 5:30). The verse emphasizes God's absolute sovereignty—human power, security measures, and status provide no protection against divine judgment. Yet Elihu again misapplies sound theology, implying Job's suffering evidences such judgment. The irony: God's "hand" has indeed struck Job (19:21), but for testing, not judgment. The verse ultimately points to final judgment when Christ returns "as a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2)—sudden, unexpected, inescapable for the unprepared.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern culture revered the mighty—kings, warriors, nobles—as seemingly invulnerable. Their sudden deaths demonstrated divine sovereignty in ways that resonated powerfully. Israel's history provided examples: Pharaoh's firstborn, Sennacherib, Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:23). The phrase "without hand" anticipates Daniel 2:34's stone "cut out without hands" that destroys earthly kingdoms—God's kingdom comes through divine, not human, agency. Elihu's description would have evoked these precedents, reinforcing his argument for God's sovereign judgment.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How does the certainty of sudden death for the mighty challenge worldly values that prize power and security?
2. What does God's ability to judge "without hand" teach about the futility of human attempts to protect ourselves from divine accountability?
3. How should awareness that death can come "in a moment" affect your daily priorities and spiritual preparedness?

## Interlinear Text

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כִּי גַעַן	יָמָתוּ	וּבְחַצְוֹת	לְיָלָה	וְיִגְעֹשׁוּ	עַם
In a moment	shall they die	at midnight	H3915	shall be troubled	and the people
H7281	H4191	H2676		H1607	H5971
וַיַּעֲבֵרֵם	וַיִּסָּרֵם	אֶת־בְּיָרֵם	לֹא	בְיָד:	
and pass away	shall be taken away	and the mighty	H3808	without hand	
H5674	H5493	H47		H3027	

