

Job 34:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.

Analysis

There is no darkness, nor shadow of death (אֵין־חֹשֶׁךְ וְאֵין צֶלְמָוֶת, 'ein-choshek ve'ein tsalmaveth)—Elihu declares God's absolute omniscience reaches even into complete darkness. The Hebrew choshek denotes physical darkness, while tsalmaveth (literally 'death-shadow') represents the deepest, most impenetrable gloom where death itself seems to cast shadows. This compound phrase echoes Psalm 139:11-12: darkness and light are alike to God.

Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves (לְהִסְתֵּר שָׁם פְּעָלֵי אָוֶן)—The reflexive verb histater emphasizes active concealment, but Elihu insists no hiding place exists from divine scrutiny. Po'alei aven (workers of iniquity) describes those who labor at evil, making wickedness their occupation. Hebrews 4:13 echoes this: 'Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight.' God's omnipresence means moral accountability is inescapable. This refutes Job's implied complaint that God overlooks injustice—rather, divine justice sees everything and will ultimately hold all accountable.

Historical Context

Elihu is speaking in Job 32-37, positioned between the three friends' failed arguments and God's direct answer. As a younger man (32:6-7), Elihu waited respectfully before speaking, then offered a perspective emphasizing God's transcendence and pedagogical use of suffering. Chapter 34 specifically addresses God's justice and governance. In ancient Near Eastern thought, darkness

represented chaos and the realm where divine order might not reach. Elihu's assertion of God's omniscience even in darkness was theologically radical, opposing pagan cosmologies that limited divine knowledge or power.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does God's ability to see into all darkness comfort the oppressed who suffer in secret?
2. What areas of your life might you be attempting to hide from God's sight, and why is such concealment ultimately futile?
3. How should the truth that 'workers of iniquity' cannot hide affect our pursuit of justice in a world where evil often seems to prosper unseen?

Interlinear Text

אֵין	חַ שָׁר	וְאֵין	צֶלֶם וְת	לְהִסְתֵּר	שֶׁ מֵ
H369	There is no darkness	H369	nor shadow of death	may hide	H8033
	H2822		H6757	H5641	
פִּי עָלִי	אֲוִן:				
where the workers	of iniquity				
H6466	H205				

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 4:13 (Parallel theme): Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Proverbs 10:29 (Sin): The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

Jeremiah 23:24 (Parallel theme): Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

Job 3:5 (Darkness): Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

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