

Job 34:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For he will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God.

Analysis

For he will not lay upon man more than right (כִּי לֹא עַל־אִישׁ יִשְׁמַע עִזָּה)—Elihu affirms God's justice never exceeds what is appropriate. The verb yasim (to set, place, lay) with 'od (more, again) indicates God doesn't impose excessive burden. This directly addresses Job's complaint that his suffering exceeds his sin. Elihu argues God's judgments are precisely calibrated to righteousness—never arbitrary or excessive.

That he should enter into judgment with God (לִבָּלֶן אֶל־אֱלֹהִים בְּמִשְׁפָּט)—The infinitive construct lahalokh (to walk, to go) with el-El (unto God) pictures entering into legal proceedings. Mishpat denotes formal judgment or legal case. Elihu's point: because God's dealings are inherently just, humans need not exhaustively investigate or second-guess divine actions before submitting to judgment. This anticipates Paul's rhetorical question in Romans 9:20: 'Who art thou that repliest against God?' God's justice is self-authenticating, requiring no defense before human tribunals.

Historical Context

Elihu's argument engages ancient Near Eastern legal concepts where disputants could challenge verdicts before higher authorities. However, Elihu insists no higher court exists above God—His judgments are final and self-justifying. This theological position counters Job's earlier demands for a mediator (9:33) or legal

advocate (16:19-21). The wisdom literature tradition emphasized accepting divine sovereignty rather than demanding exhaustive explanations for suffering.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. When has questioning God's justice actually been a disguised demand that He justify Himself to you?
2. How can we distinguish between honest wrestling with God's ways (like Job) and arrogant challenging of divine authority?
3. What comfort comes from knowing God never lays upon us 'more than right,' even when suffering feels overwhelming?

Interlinear Text

עַל־אָדָם אַיִשׁ יְמִינָה יְמִינָה
upon man For he will not lay
H3588 H3808 H5921 H376 H7760 H5750

בְּמִשְׁפָּט: אַל־לְכַدֵּן בְּמִשְׁפָּט: אַל־לְכַדֵּן
more than right that he should enter with God into judgment
H1980 H413 H410 H4941

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:137 (Judgment): Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments.

Ezra 9:13 (References God): And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this;

Isaiah 42:3 (Judgment): A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

Job 16:21 (References God): O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!

Job 23:7 (Judgment): There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.

Job 11:11 (Parallel theme): For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it?

Job 11:6 (References God): And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.

Jeremiah 2:5 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?

Romans 9:20 (References God): Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?