

Job 34:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.

Analysis

Should it be according to thy mind? (הַמְשֻׁתָּב יְשַׁלְּמֶה) hame'immekha yeshalemennah)—Elihu challenges Job: should God govern according to Job's standards? The phrase **he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose** (כִּי־אַתָּה מְאַסֵּת כִּי־אַתָּה תִּבְחַר) ki-attah ma'asta ki-attah tivchar) uses ma'as (מְאַסֵּת, "to reject") and bachar (בִּבְחָר, "to choose"). God's justice operates independently of human approval or rejection. The phrase **and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest** (וְלֹא־אָנִי וְמֵה־יָדַעַת זֶבַר) (v'la-a-anai v'meh-yad'at z'bar) shifts burden to Job—if you know better, speak.

This is theodicy's central question: does God answer to human moral intuitions, or do we submit to His revealed character? Isaiah 55:8-9 answers: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." Romans 9:20 challenges: "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Yet Scripture also validates lament and questioning (Habakkuk, Psalms). The gospel resolves this: the cross reveals God's justice and mercy united (Romans 3:25-26)—satisfying both divine righteousness and human need.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern texts (e.g., Babylonian Theodicy) featured dialogues questioning divine justice. Biblical faith uniquely permits questioning God while ultimately requiring submission. Prophets challenged God (Jeremiah 12:1,

Habakkuk 1:2-4) but bowed to divine sovereignty (Jeremiah 12:5-6, Habakkuk 2:4). Job's friends demanded immediate submission; Elihu permits questions but ultimately points to God's incomprehensibility. This prepares for divine answer that neither explains nor condemns Job's questioning but reveals God's transcendent majesty.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do we balance honest questioning with submission to divine sovereignty?
2. What does the cross reveal about God's character that answers theodicy's questions?
3. How should we respond when God's ways contradict our moral intuitions?

Interlinear Text

בְּמַעַמְךָ

H5973

וְשַׁלֵּת בָּהּ

H7999

Should it be according to thy mind he will recompense

כִּי

מִאָתָה

כִּי

אָתָה

it whether thou refuse

H3588

it whether thou refuse

H3588

H859

תִּבְנֶם רָ

אֵלָא

לֹמְדָה

לֹא

וְתִּבְנֶם אָנָּי

H589

H4100

what thou knowest

or whether thou choose

H977

H3808

H3045

לֹבֶרֶן

and not I therefore speak

H1696

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 135:6 (Parallel theme): Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

Job 33:32 (Parallel theme): If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee.