

Job 34:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment.

Analysis

For Job hath said, I am righteous (כִּי-אָמַר אִיּוֹב צְדָקָתִי—ki-amar Iyyov tsadaqt)—Elihu quotes (or paraphrases) Job's self-defense. The verb tsadaq means to be just, righteous, or in the right. Job indeed claimed innocence (9:15, 21; 10:7; 27:6), though context shows he meant 'innocent of sins deserving this suffering' not 'sinless perfection.' Elihu may oversimplify Job's position or genuinely misunderstand the distinction. **And God hath taken away my judgment** (אֵל הַסִּיר מִשְׁפָטִי—El hesir mishpati)—Job complained that God denied him justice (mishpat), refusing to answer his case (19:6-7; 27:2).

Elihu identifies the theological crisis: Job's dual claim to personal righteousness and divine injustice creates logical tension. If God is just, Job must be guilty; if Job is innocent, God is unjust. Elihu (and later God) will challenge this false dichotomy. The resolution requires understanding that suffering serves purposes beyond retribution—testing, refinement, education (33:14-30). New Testament theology completes this: tribulation produces perseverance and character (Romans 5:3-4), and all discipline proves sonship (Hebrews 12:6).

Historical Context

Elihu addresses the core question driving the entire dialogue: can righteous people suffer without it proving guilt or divine injustice? Ancient Near Eastern theology generally assumed direct retribution—blessing for obedience, cursing for sin. Job's case exposed this framework's inadequacy. Elihu attempts to move beyond

retributive thinking toward educative and developmental purposes for suffering, preparing for God's revelation that divine purposes transcend human categories.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do we avoid Job's friends' error (assuming suffering proves guilt) and Job's error (demanding answers as a right)?
2. What does the book of Job teach about suffering that serves purposes beyond punishment?
3. How does Christ's innocent suffering provide the ultimate answer to whether the righteous can suffer unjustly?

Interlinear Text

מִשְׁפָטִים: הָסֵר יְרֵא אֶל־לֹא־צָדֵקְתִּי אֵין־בָּבְעֵד אָמַר כִּי
H3588 hath said H559 H347 H6663 and God H410 H5493 H4941 my judgment
For Job I am righteous hath taken away

Additional Cross-References

Job 33:9 (Parallel theme): I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.

Job 27:2 (Judgment): As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul;