

Job 34:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.

Analysis

For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God. Elihu attributes to Job a statement Job never made. The Hebrew chepets (חֶפֶט, "profiteth") means to find pleasure or advantage. Yitratsen (יתַּרְצֵן, "delight himself") comes from ratsah (רָצַח), meaning to be pleased with or find acceptance. The accusation is that Job denies any benefit from delighting in God—essentially claiming piety is futile.

This misrepresentation reveals Elihu's fundamental misunderstanding. Job never said serving God is unprofitable; rather, he protested that God seems to treat the righteous and wicked alike (9:22-24), making moral distinctions apparently meaningless. Job's complaint wasn't that delighting in God brings no profit, but that suffering makes it difficult to perceive divine justice. The difference is crucial—Job questions God's visible methods while maintaining his relationship with God. Elihu's false summary demonstrates how easily suffering saints' honest struggles can be twisted into heresy. Ironically, Satan's original accusation (1:9) was the inverse: that Job served God only for profit. The book vindicates Job against both accusations—he serves God neither solely for advantage nor believing service is worthless, but because God is worthy regardless of circumstances. This anticipates Habakkuk 3:17-18's commitment to rejoice in God even when blessings fail.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom tradition connected righteousness with prosperity, making Job's suffering theologically problematic. Elihu, like the friends, cannot reconcile suffering with innocence, so he reframes Job's protests as theological error. The book challenges this entire framework by revealing that suffering can serve purposes beyond punishment—testing, testimony, and ultimately deeper knowledge of God.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Have you ever been misunderstood when expressing honest questions about God's ways?
2. How does Job's story liberate us to bring our genuine struggles before God without fear of being labeled unfaithful?
3. What's the difference between questioning God's methods and denying God's worthiness?

Interlinear Text

בְּ רָצַת־
כִּי לֹא אִם־
H3588 For he hath said H3808 It profiteth H5532 a man H1397 nothing that he should delight
H559 H1397 H7521

עִם אֱלֹהִים:
H5973 himself with God H430

Additional Cross-References

Job 35:3 (Parallel theme): For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?

Malachi 3:14 (References God): Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?

Psalms 37:4 (Light): Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Job 27:10 (Light): Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?

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