

Job 36:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.

Analysis

Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke (כִּי־
חֶמֶה פָּרִיסִיתָךְ בְּסַפְאָךְ, ki-chemah pen y'sit'kha v'safeh)—Elihu warns of divine chemah (burning anger, wrath), using safek (a stroke, blow, clapping) to describe sudden judgment. The verb suit (to entice away, remove) suggests being swept away irresistibly. This parallels verse 16's promise—God can either entice Job toward blessing or remove him in judgment. The choice depends on Job's response.

Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee (וְלֹא־יִצְלַכְּ בְּכַבְ-כָּפֵר) v'lo yatsil'kha v'rav kofer)—The word kofer (ransom price, atonement money) appears in Exodus 30:12 for the census tax and in Proverbs 6:35 where no ransom satisfies an offended husband. Elihu argues that once divine wrath falls fully, no amount of wealth can purchase deliverance. This anticipates the New Testament truth that we cannot ransom ourselves from God's judgment (Psalm 49:7-8, Mark 8:37). Only Christ provides the ransom (1 Timothy 2:6, 1 Peter 1:18-19). Elihu's warning, though misdirected toward Job, contains sober truth: there comes a point where opportunity for repentance closes.

Historical Context

The concept of ransom was central to ancient Near Eastern justice. Offenders could sometimes pay compensation to avoid punishment. Exodus 21:30 allowed ransom for accidental manslaughter. However, some offenses—particularly those against God—admitted no monetary compensation. The prophets repeatedly

warned that Israel's sin had reached the point where no sacrifice could avert judgment (Jeremiah 14:12, Ezekiel 7:19).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does understanding that no human ransom can save us drive us to Christ, our only sufficient ransom?
2. What warnings in your life might God be using to call you to repentance before judgment becomes inevitable?
3. How do we balance healthy fear of divine judgment with confidence in Christ's completed atonement?

Interlinear Text

בַּקְשֵׁר	פָּנָים	מִתְּהִלָּה	מִתְּהִלָּה	יִסְתַּחַת	בְּקָרְבָּן
H3588	Because there is wrath	H2534	H6435	beware lest he take thee away	H5607
				H5496	

רָמֶן	אֵל	כִּפְרָנָה	אֵל	כִּפְרָנָה	רָמֶן
H7227	ransom	H408	cannot deliver	H3724	H5186

Additional Cross-References

Job 33:24 (Redemption): Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.

Romans 1:18 (Judgment): For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Ephesians 5:6 (Judgment): Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

Isaiah 14:6 (Judgment): He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.

Psalms 2:5 (Judgment): Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

Psalms 2:12 (Judgment): Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Psalms 110:5 (Judgment): The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

Psalms 39:10 (Parallel theme): Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

Romans 2:5 (Judgment): But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasures up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Matthew 3:7 (Judgment): But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?