

Job 36:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Will he esteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.

Analysis

Will he esteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength (בַּיִשְׁרָךְ)—The Hebrew here is notoriously difficult, but the sense is clear: wealth cannot buy deliverance from God's judgment. The verb arak means 'to arrange, set in order, value, esteem.' Elihu argues that neither shua (riches, crying out) nor **all the forces of strength** (כָּל כְּחָמָץ-כְּחָם, kol ma'amatzei koach)—meaning all exertions of power—can avail when God acts in judgment.

This directly addresses Job's situation. Before his testing, Job was the wealthiest man in the East (1:3). Now stripped of everything, Job learns what Elihu declares: material resources and human strength cannot manipulate God or escape His purposes. This truth echoes throughout Scripture: 'Riches profit not in the day of wrath' (Proverbs 11:4). Jesus taught the same: 'What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' (Mark 8:36). The rich young ruler learned this painfully (Luke 18:18-25). Paul declared all his advantages as 'dung' compared to knowing Christ (Philippians 3:8).

Historical Context

In the ancient Near East, wealth and power were viewed as divine blessings and means of security. Kings amassed gold and armies believing these provided safety. The wisdom literature of Israel consistently challenged this assumption, insisting

that righteousness and fear of God mattered infinitely more than material resources (Proverbs 10:2, 11:28, 16:16).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What resources or strengths are you tempted to trust in instead of relying fully on God?
2. How does losing everything strip away false securities and reveal what we truly value?
3. In what ways does modern prosperity gospel teaching contradict Elihu's truth that riches cannot buy God's favor?

Interlinear Text

מְאֹמֵן לֹא שְׁאַל בְּצָר הַנְּעָר גַּם
Will he esteem thy riches no not gold nor all the forces
H6186 H7769 H3808 H1222 H3605 H3981

כַּח:
of strength
H3581

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 11:4 (Parallel theme): Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.

Proverbs 11:21 (Parallel theme): Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

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