

Job 36:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.

Analysis

Elihu exclaims: 'Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.' The phrase *El saggi* (אֱלֹהִים שָׁגִי, God is great) uses *saggi* (שָׁגִי), meaning abundant, great, or mighty. The confession 'we know him not' (*lo neda*, לֹא נָדָע) admits epistemic limitation. The phrase 'neither can the number of his years be searched out' (*u-mispar shanav lo-chaqer*, וְיִמְסָפֶר שָׁנָיו לֹא־חִקֵּר) emphasizes divine eternity. Elihu balances knowledge and mystery—we know God truly but not exhaustively. This theological humility corrects both Job's demands and the friends' presumptuous certainty.

Historical Context

The confession that God's years cannot be searched out addresses divine eternity—God exists outside time. Ancient Near Eastern deities were often portrayed within time, aging or dying. Biblical theology uniquely affirms eternal God beyond temporal limits. Elihu's statement prepares for God's revelation where divine transcendence will be demonstrated through creation's wonders that exceed human comprehension.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do we hold together truly knowing God while admitting we cannot know Him exhaustively?
2. What does God's eternity teach us about patience when His purposes unfold on timescales beyond our comprehension?

Interlinear Text

הֵן	אֵל	שׁ גִּיָּא	וְלֹא	נֵדָע	מִסְפַּר
H2005	Behold God	is great	H3808	and we know	him not neither can the number
	H410	H7689		H3045	H4557
שָׁנָה יוֹ	וְלֹא	חִקְרָה:			
of his years	H3808	be searched out			
H8141		H2714			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 90:2 (References God): Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Psalms 145:3 (Parallel theme): Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.

Job 37:23 (Parallel theme): Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.

Job 37:5 (References God): God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.

1 Corinthians 13:12 (Parallel theme): For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

1 Kings 8:27 (References God): But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?

Job 26:14 (Parallel theme): Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?

Hebrews 1:12 (Parallel theme): And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

Job 10:5 (Parallel theme): Are thy days as the days of man? are thy years as man's days,

2 Peter 3:8 (Parallel theme): But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.