

Job 36:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance.

Analysis

For by them judgeth he the people (כִּי־בָם יִדִין עַמִּים, ki-vam yadin amim)—The phrase "by them" likely refers to meteorological phenomena (rain, lightning, clouds) as instruments of divine judgment. The verb din (דִּין, "to judge, govern") has both judicial and providential senses. The phrase **he giveth meat in abundance** (וַיִּתֶּן־אֶכֶל לַמִּכְבִּיר, yitten-okhel lemakvir) uses okhel (אֶכֶל, food) and kabiyr (כָּבִיר, abundant, mighty). Weather serves both judgment (withholding rain, sending destructive storms) and blessing (providing rain for crops).

This dual nature of divine providence—blessing and judgment—appears throughout Scripture. Deuteronomy 11:13-17 promises rain for obedience, drought for disobedience. Amos 4:7-9 describes God withholding rain as judgment. Yet Matthew 5:45 emphasizes indiscriminate provision: rain on just and unjust. The tension resolves eschatologically: common grace now provides for all, but final judgment separates (Matthew 25:31-46). The gospel reveals ultimate judgment fell on Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21), ensuring believers receive only providential care, never condemnation (Romans 8:1).

Historical Context

Ancient covenant theology explicitly linked weather to obedience. Leviticus 26:3-4 promises rain and crops for obedience; vv. 18-20 threaten drought for disobedience. Deuteronomy 28:12, 23-24 repeats this covenant structure. Prophets interpreted drought as divine judgment (Jeremiah 14:1-9, Haggai 1:10-11). Jesus

and NT writers shift focus from national-temporal blessings to spiritual-eternal (Matthew 6:19-33, Philippians 4:11-13). Yet natural disasters still display God's sovereignty, calling to repentance (Luke 13:1-5, Revelation 16:8-9).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How do we understand God's use of natural phenomena for both blessing and judgment?
2. What is the relationship between God's providential care and His judicial activity?
3. How does the gospel transform our interpretation of natural disasters and blessings?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	בָּם	יִדּוּ	עַמּוֹ	יִתֵּן	אֶכָּל	לְמַכְבִּיר:
H3588	H0	H1777	H5971	H5414	H400	H4342
		For by them judgeth	he the people	he giveth	meat	in abundance

Additional Cross-References

Acts 14:17 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Psalms 136:25 (Parallel theme): Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Job 37:13 (Parallel theme): He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.

