

Job 36:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.

Analysis

He preserveth not the life of the wicked—The Hebrew לֹא־יַחְיֶה (lo-yechayeh, "does not keep alive") states God's active judgment against רָשָׁע (rasha, "the wicked")—those who live in persistent rebellion. This counters Job's complaint that the wicked prosper (21:7-13). **But giveth right to the poor** uses מִשְׁפָּט (mishpat, "justice/right") and אֲנִיִּיִם (aniyyim, "afflicted/poor"), affirming God's preferential concern for the oppressed.

Elihu presents God's moral governance: the wicked's apparent prosperity is temporary, while God ensures justice for the vulnerable. This theological principle saturates Scripture—Psalm 37:35-36 describes the wicked's sudden disappearance; Luke 1:52-53 celebrates God casting down the mighty and exalting the humble. Elihu refutes Job's complaint that God ignores injustice, insisting divine judgment operates on God's timeline, not human impatience.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern societies operated on patron-client systems where the wealthy exploited the poor with impunity. Israel's law codes uniquely protected the vulnerable (Exodus 22:21-27, Deuteronomy 15:7-11), reflecting Yahweh's character as defender of the oppressed. Job's speeches questioned whether God actually enforces this moral order. Elihu reasserts orthodox covenant theology: God judges wickedness and vindicates the righteous, even when delayed judgment tests faith.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does trusting God's timing for judgment affect your response to injustice in the world?
2. What does God's giving 'right to the poor' reveal about His priorities in human society?
3. How can we participate in God's justice for the oppressed while waiting for His ultimate judgment?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	יְחִיָּה	רֶשָׁע	וּמִשְׁפַּט	עֲנִיִּים	יִתֵּן:
H3808	He preserveth not the life	of the wicked	right	to the poor	but giveth
	H2421	H7563	H4941	H6041	H5414

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 140:12 (Parallel theme): I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.

Job 5:15 (Parallel theme): But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.

Isaiah 11:4 (Evil): But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

Psalms 9:12 (Parallel theme): When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

Psalms 55:23 (Parallel theme): But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.

Psalms 72:4 (Parallel theme): He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

2 Peter 2:9 (Parallel theme): The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

Job 21:30 (Evil): That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.