

Job 36:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions
that they have exceeded.

Analysis

Then he sheweth them their work—God uses affliction to reveal עֲלָמָם (po'olam, "their work/deeds"), exposing hidden patterns of behavior. **And their transgressions that they have exceeded** employs עֲשָׂה (pesha, "transgression/rebellion") and הִתְגַּבְּרוּ (hitgabbaru, "they have acted arrogantly/exceeded bounds"). The verb means "to be strong" or "prevail," suggesting sin that has grown powerful, unchecked until affliction exposes it.

Elihu's insight: suffering functions diagnostically, revealing spiritual diseases we couldn't see in prosperity. Like an MRI exposing internal damage, affliction illuminates hidden pride, self-reliance, or idolatry. God allows pain to surface transgression before it metastasizes fatally. This merciful intervention prevents greater judgment—better temporary suffering that brings repentance than comfortable sin leading to damnation. Proverbs 3:11-12 teaches this same principle: God's reproof proves His love, as fathers discipline beloved children.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom recognized suffering's revelatory function. Egyptian and Mesopotamian texts describe divine discipline, though often portraying gods as capricious. Elihu's theology differs: Yahweh disciplines purposefully to reveal specific transgressions requiring correction. This covenant relationship assumes God cares enough to correct, unlike pagan deities who might torment without

redemptive intent. The concept of disciplinary suffering became central to Jewish and Christian theology of sanctification.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What hidden sins or character flaws has God revealed to you through seasons of affliction?
2. How can we cultivate receptiveness to God's corrective work rather than resisting or resenting discipline?
3. What's the difference between God showing us our sin and Satan accusing us? How do we discern which voice we're hearing?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשְׁמַע	לָהֶם	פְּעָלָם	וּפְשָׁעֵיהֶם	כִּי
Then he sheweth	H1992	them their work	and their transgressions	H3588
H5046		H6467	H6588	
וַתֵּבֶרְאוּ:				
that they have exceeded				
H1396				

Additional Cross-References

Job 15:25 (Parallel theme): For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.

1 Corinthians 11:32 (Parallel theme): But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

