

Job 37:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.

Analysis

Elihu concludes: "Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart." The verb yare (ירא, "fear") means reverential awe. The phrase "wise of heart" (chakhemei-lev, חכם-לב) describes those who consider themselves intelligent or discerning. The verb ra'ah (ראה, "respecteth") in negative form means God doesn't regard or show partiality toward self-perceived wisdom. Elihu correctly asserts that God's greatness should inspire fear and that human wisdom doesn't impress Him. This echoes Isaiah 66:2: God esteems "him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." From a Reformed perspective, this demonstrates that intellectual achievement doesn't grant special access to God—He reveals Himself to the humble, not the proud (James 4:6). Yet Elihu's lengthy speeches (six chapters!) ironically demonstrate self-important wisdom. True fear of the Lord requires not only theological knowledge but heart humility—something Elihu professes better than he practices.

Historical Context

Ancient wisdom traditions valued intellectual achievement and learning. However, biblical wisdom literature consistently subordinates human wisdom to divine revelation and moral character. Proverbs declares "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (9:10)—not vice versa. Elihu's conclusion aligns with this tradition, though his verbose delivery undercuts his message.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does intellectual achievement in theology relate to genuine knowledge of God?
2. What is the difference between being wise and being "wise of heart" in ways God doesn't respect?
3. How can we pursue theological learning while maintaining the humility that attracts God's attention?

Interlinear Text

לְכִי	לְכִי	יְרָא אֱלֹהִים	אָנָשִׁים	לֹא	רָאָה	הִנֵּה	כִּי
H3651	do therefore fear	H3372	Men	H3808	him he respecteth	H7200	H3605
			H582				
לֹבֶן	לֹבֶן	מְכֻמִּים	מְכֻמִּים				
not any that are wise	not any that are wise	of heart	of heart				
H2450		H3820					

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:28 (Parallel theme): And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

1 Corinthians 1:26 (Parallel theme): For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

Isaiah 5:21 (Parallel theme): Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

Psalms 130:4 (Parallel theme): But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

Job 5:13 (Parallel theme): He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.

Romans 2:4 (Parallel theme): Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

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