

Job 4:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die,
even without wisdom.

Analysis

Eliphaz concludes: 'Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.' Human 'excellency' (Hebrew 'yether'—abundance/cord) is temporary. The phrase 'die without wisdom' suggests people perish without understanding why—implying Job's suffering proves his spiritual ignorance. Yet this contradicts God's own assessment (Job 1:8). Eliphaz's vision delivers a message of hopeless human depravity without grace—technically true about fallen humanity but false about God's redemptive work.

Historical Context

Dying 'without wisdom' meant perishing without understanding life's meaning or achieving the goal of wisdom literature—to know and fear God. Eliphaz uses this as a threat rather than seeing suffering as God's means of deepening wisdom.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does suffering deepen rather than disprove wisdom when rightly understood?
2. What distinguishes the message of human depravity apart from grace from the gospel message of depravity overcome by grace?

Interlinear Text

הֵלֵא	נִסְעוּ	יִתְּנוּ	וְיָמוּ	וְיָמוּ	וְיָמוּ
H3808	which is in them go away	Doth not their excellency	H0	they die	H3808
	H5265	H3499		H4191	

בְּחִכְמָהּ:

even without wisdom

H2451

Additional Cross-References

Job 36:12 (Parallel theme): But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.

Job 8:22 (Parallel theme): They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought.