

Job 41:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

Analysis

God asks: 'Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.' The verb qadam (קָדַם, prevented) means to meet, confront, or anticipate—'who has given to me first that I should repay him?' The rhetorical question establishes that God owes nothing to anyone; all creation belongs to Him. The phrase tachat kol-hashamayim li-hu (תַּחַת כָּל־הַשָּׁמַיִם לִי־הוּא), whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine) asserts absolute divine ownership. Paul quotes this verse in Romans 11:35 when discussing God's sovereign grace. God isn't indebted to creatures; all blessings are grace, not payment owed.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern religions often portrayed gods as needing humans for food, service, or worship. Biblical theology uniquely affirms God's self-sufficiency—He needs nothing from creatures (Psalm 50:10-12, Acts 17:24-25). The question addresses Job's implied claim that his righteousness deserved better treatment. God reframes the issue: even Job's righteousness (genuine as it is) doesn't create divine obligation. All blessing is grace; suffering doesn't violate justice because God owes nothing.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that God owes us nothing change our response to both blessing and suffering?
2. What does divine self-sufficiency teach about the nature of grace versus merit?

Interlinear Text

מִי	הַ קִּדְּמֵנִי	וְאַשְׁלֵם	כָּל תְּחִתָּה	כָּל
H4310	Who hath prevented	me that I should repay	H8478	H3605
	H6923	H7999		
	הַ שָּׁמַיִם	הוּא לִי		
	him whatsoever is under the whole heaven	H0 H1931		
	H8064			

Additional Cross-References

Romans 11:35 (Parallel theme): Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

Psalms 24:1 (Parallel theme): The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

Job 35:7 (Parallel theme): If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?

Psalms 50:12 (Parallel theme): If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.

Exodus 19:5 (Parallel theme): Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

Deuteronomy 10:14 (Parallel theme): Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.

1 Corinthians 10:26 (Parallel theme): For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

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