

Job 5:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

Analysis

Eliphaz concludes: 'So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.' The poor receive hope because God acts on their behalf, while wickedness ('iniquity') is silenced. This beautiful theology becomes a weapon when Eliphaz implies Job's continuing suffering and vocal lament prove he's not among the hopeful poor but rather the silenced wicked. True Reformed theology affirms that God's people have hope even in continued suffering (Romans 5:3-5) and that lament is legitimate (Lamentations).

Historical Context

The silencing of iniquity/wickedness appears throughout ancient Near Eastern justice literature as the ideal outcome of divine or royal intervention. Eliphaz wrongly applies this to argue that Job's unsilenced complaints prove his wickedness.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do you maintain Christian hope while honestly expressing pain and confusion?
2. What distinguishes biblical lament from the complaints of the wicked that God silences?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא תִּתְּמַכֵּן
H1961 So the poor
לְבָדֵק הַעֲלֵת תְּמִימָה
H1800 hath hope
וְלֹא תִּפְצַח בְּפִיה
H8615 and iniquity
וְלֹא תִּפְצַח בְּפִיה
H5766 stoppeth
וְלֹא תִּפְצַח בְּפִיה
H7092 her mouth
H6310

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 107:42 (Sin): The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

Psalms 63:11 (Parallel theme): But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

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