

Job 5:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.

Analysis

Eliphaz continues his counsel to Job with promises of covenant blessing for the righteous. The phrase "**thou shalt be in league**" (ki im-avnei hassadeh veriteka) literally means "your covenant shall be with the stones of the field." The Hebrew berit (covenant/league) indicates a formal, binding relationship of peace.

The subject is striking: "**stones of the field**"—typically obstacles to farming. In ancient agriculture, rocky soil was a constant challenge. The promise that even stones would be in covenant suggests miraculous harmony with creation itself. The parallel statement reinforces this: "**the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee**" (vechayat hassadeh hoshlmah lak). The verb shalam means to be complete, whole, or at peace—the same root as shalom.

This imagery recalls Edenic harmony before the fall, when creation existed in perfect peace. Eliphaz promises that the righteous will experience restoration of this harmony—stones won't hinder work, wild animals won't threaten. This represents complete security and divine favor manifested in the natural world. However, the irony is that Eliphaz applies this incorrectly to Job, assuming Job's suffering proves unrighteousness.

Historical Context

This speech comes early in Job's dialogues with his three friends, around 2000-1800 BC based on patriarchal setting. Eliphaz was likely from Teman, known

for wisdom (Jeremiah 49:7). His theology represented the conventional wisdom of the ancient Near East: righteousness brings blessing, suffering indicates sin.

The agricultural imagery would resonate deeply with an ancient audience. Stones were a perpetual problem—they had to be cleared from fields, they broke plow tips, and they limited crop yields. God's covenant with Noah established peace between humans and animals (Genesis 9), but attacks from wild beasts remained a real danger in the ancient world. Lions, bears, and wolves threatened both livestock and people. The promise of peace with animals appears elsewhere as a covenant blessing (Leviticus 26:6; Ezekiel 34:25; Hosea 2:18). Eliphaz's words echo legitimate covenant promises, but his application fails because he doesn't understand that Job's suffering isn't punitive but testing. The book of Job ultimately challenges the simplistic retribution theology that Eliphaz represents.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to have a 'covenant' or 'league' with stones and beasts?
2. How does this promise relate to humanity's original dominion over creation?
3. Why does Eliphaz's theologically sound promise fail to comfort Job?
4. In what ways do we see nature's hostility as a result of the fall?
5. How might this verse point prophetically to the final restoration of creation?

Interlinear Text

עַם כִּי	אֲבָנֵי י	הַ שָּׂדֶה	בְּרִיתְךָ	וְחַיֵּית
H3588	H5973	with the stones	of the field	For thou shalt be in league and the beasts
	H68		H7704	H1285
				H2416
הַ שָּׂדֶה	הַשְּׁלָמָה	לָךְ:		
of the field	shall be at peace	H0		
H7704	H7999			

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 26:6 (Peace): And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.

Hosea 2:18 (Parallel theme): And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.

Daniel 6:22 (Parallel theme): My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.