

Job 6:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend.

Analysis

Job's accusation intensifies with two vivid metaphors of betrayal. 'Overwhelm' (naphal, נִפְלָא) literally means to cause to fall or cast lots over, suggesting his friends would exploit even orphans for personal gain. 'Dig a pit' (karah, נִקְהָ) evokes the hunter's trap, a premeditated act of destruction against one who should be protected. The progression from 'fatherless' to 'friend' is devastating—Job claims his companions would harm both the defenseless stranger and their intimate ally. This hyperbolic language expresses Job's perception that his friends' theological assault feels worse than physical violence. By prioritizing their doctrinal framework over Job's actual condition, they commit a form of spiritual violence. This verse foreshadows Jesus's teaching that religious leaders can burden people rather than help them (Matthew 23:4), and James's warning that faith without works—including compassion—is dead (James 2:15-17).

Historical Context

Protection of orphans and widows was a covenant responsibility in ancient Near Eastern society, with special penalties for those who exploited the vulnerable (Exodus 22:22-24). Job's accusation that his friends would even mistreat orphans represents the ultimate moral failure in his culture. Friendship bonds were considered sacred, often formalized through covenantal meals and oaths, making betrayal of a friend particularly heinous.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. In what ways might our theological certainty cause us to 'dig a pit' for those who are suffering?
2. How does Jesus's treatment of the broken and desperate contrast with Job's friends' approach?
3. What safeguards can prevent us from valuing doctrinal correctness above Christlike compassion?

Interlinear Text

רַיְשָׁכֶם: שְׁלִי תְּכַרְתִּי תְּפַלְתִּי יְתִים אָפָל
H637 H5921 the fatherless H3490 H5307 H3738 H5921 H7453 a pit for your friend

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 7:15 (Parallel theme): He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.

Job 22:9 (Parallel theme): Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.

Job 24:3 (Parallel theme): They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.

Job 24:9 (Parallel theme): They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor.

2 Peter 2:3 (Parallel theme): And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

Nahum 3:10 (Parallel theme): Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.

James 1:27 (Parallel theme): Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Joel 3:3 (Parallel theme): And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.