

Job 1:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

Analysis

Job's response to catastrophic loss stands as one of Scripture's most profound expressions of faith under trial. The phrase "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither" recognizes human finitude and the temporary nature of earthly possessions. The Hebrew word for "naked" (arom, אָרוֹם) emphasizes complete vulnerability and dependence—we enter and exit life without material goods. "Return thither" uses the verb shuv (שׁוּב), meaning to turn back or return, pointing to the earth as humanity's origin and destination (Genesis 3:19).

The theological heart appears in "the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away." The divine name Yahweh (יְהוָה) appears twice, framing God as the sovereign giver and taker of all blessings. The verbs "gave" (natan, נָתַן) and "taken away" (laqach, לָקַח) establish God's absolute authority over creation and providence. Job acknowledges divine ownership—possessions, children, and health were never truly his but gifts entrusted to him temporarily. This perspective revolutionizes how we view blessing and loss.

"Blessed be the name of the LORD" (baruk shem Yahweh, בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם יְהוָה) crowns Job's response with worship. Despite losing ten children, vast wealth, and health in rapid succession, Job blesses God's name—His revealed character and reputation. This isn't stoic resignation but active worship rooted in understanding God's sovereignty. The New Testament echoes this principle: "the Lord gave, and the

Lord hath taken away" (1 Timothy 6:7). Job's faith anticipates Paul's teaching that we brought nothing into this world and can carry nothing out.

Historical Context

This verse occurs in Job's immediate response to devastating news: the death of all ten children and loss of all livestock and servants (Job 1:13-19). Set in the patriarchal period (approximately 2000-1800 BC), the narrative unfolds in the land of Uz, likely in Edom or northern Arabia. Job's extreme wealth measured in livestock reflects patriarchal economics, where animals constituted primary capital.

Ancient Near Eastern culture emphasized honor, reputation, and material prosperity as signs of divine favor. Job's losses would have been interpreted by contemporaries as evidence of divine displeasure or hidden sin. His response—worshiping rather than cursing God—stands radically counter-cultural. The prologue (Job 1-2) reveals what Job doesn't know: his suffering results from a heavenly challenge, not personal sin. Satan has accused Job of serving God only for material benefits, claiming he would curse God if blessing were removed.

Job's worship vindicates God's confidence in him and refutes Satan's accusation. His recognition of divine sovereignty over blessing and adversity reflects mature covenant faith. This passage has sustained believers through loss across millennia, from ancient Israel through early church persecution to modern suffering. It establishes that authentic faith worships God for who He is, not merely for what He gives. Early church fathers cited this passage when addressing theodicy and proper response to suffering.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that all blessings come from God's hand change your response to loss or disappointment?
2. What does it mean practically to worship God in the midst of devastating circumstances?
3. How does Job's response challenge the prosperity gospel that equates faith with material blessing?
4. In what ways can we cultivate Job's perspective that sees earthly possessions as temporary stewardship rather than permanent ownership?
5. How does this verse prepare us to face our own mortality and the reality that we cannot take possessions with us?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	וְעָרָם	יָצָאתִי	מִבֶּטֶן	אִמִּי	וְעָרָם	אֲשׁוּב
And said	Naked	came I out	womb	of my mother's	Naked	shall I return
H559	H6174	H3318	H990	H517	H6174	H7725
שָׁמָּה	יְהוָה	נָתַן	יְהוָה	לָקַח	יְהוָה	שֵׁם
H8033	and the LORD	gave	and the LORD	hath taken away	H1961	be the name
	H3068	H5414	H3068	H3947		H8034
יְהוָה	מְבֹרָךְ:					
and the LORD	blessed					
H3068	H1288					

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 5:15 (Parallel theme): As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.

1 Timothy 6:7 (Parallel theme): For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (Parallel theme): In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

James 1:17 (Parallel theme): Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Job 2:10 (Parallel theme): But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Ephesians 5:20 (References Lord): Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Isaiah 45:7 (References Lord): I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.

Psalms 49:17 (Parallel theme): For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.

1 Samuel 2:7 (References Lord): The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 (Parallel theme): Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.