

Job 10:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.

Analysis

Job wishes for stillborn death: 'I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.' The phrase 'as though I had not been' (kelo hayiti, כִּלְאֵי הָיִיתִי) expresses desire for complete non-existence. Direct passage 'from womb to grave' (mibeten laqeber, מִבֶּטֶן לְקֶבֶר) describes stillbirth—never breathing, never knowing conscious existence. Job envisions this as preferable to his current suffering.

The verse reveals suffering's power to make non-existence seem better than existence. Job doesn't merely want death now but retroactive non-existence—to erase his entire life as though it never occurred. This isn't theological nihilism but experiential despair. Job maintains God's reality while questioning whether his own existence has value. The lament is intensely personal—not 'life is meaningless' but 'my life is unbearable.'

The gospel transforms this: Christ makes our existence eternally meaningful by uniting us to Himself. Believers' lives are 'hid with Christ in God' (Colossians 3:3)—our existence matters infinitely because connected to His. Job wants erasure; Christ provides eternal significance. Job wants non-existence; Christ provides resurrection life that cannot end.

Historical Context

Ancient cultures recognized stillbirth as tragedy for the child denied life yet also understood it as escaping suffering's burdens. Job's preference for stillbirth over living reflects how extreme suffering can invert normal values, making death seem better than life.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does union with Christ provide the eternal significance that makes existence meaningful despite suffering?
2. What does Job's desire for non-existence teach about pastoral ministry to the suicidal?
3. In what ways does resurrection hope transform our assessment of whether existence is worthwhile?

Interlinear Text

כְּאִשׁוֹר	לֹא	הָיִיתִי	אֶהְיֶה	הָיִיתִי	מִבֶּטֶן	לְקַבֵּר
H834	H3808	H1961	H1961		from the womb	to the grave
					H990	H6913

אוֹכֵל:

I should have been as though I had not been I should have been carried

H2986

