

# Job 10:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little,

## Analysis

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Job contemplates mortality's brevity: 'Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little.' The question 'Are not my days few?' (lo meat yamay, לֹא מֵעַט יָמַי) acknowledges life's brevity. Job pleads 'cease' (chadal, חָדַל, stop or desist) and 'let me alone' (shith mimmenni, שִׁית מִמֶּנִּי, leave from me) so he can 'take comfort' (abligha, אֲבַלֶּיגָה, brighten or be glad) 'a little' (meat, מֵעַט, small amount).

Job's request is modest—not perpetual happiness but brief respite before death. The plea reveals suffering's toll: Job cannot envision long-term relief, only momentary comfort. Life's brevity usually motivates urgency (Psalm 90:12), but for Job it supports petition for mercy—if days are few, why not grant brief relief? The argument has logical force: punish later or skip it entirely since death comes soon anyway.

James 4:14 echoes Job's brevity theme: 'What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth.' But the application differs: James warns against presumption, while Job appeals for mercy. Life's brevity cuts both ways—it should humble the proud and comfort the afflicted. Job needs the latter application.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern wisdom frequently meditated on life's transience (Psalm 39:4-5, 90:3-6, 103:15-16, Ecclesiastes 6:12). Job appeals to this common wisdom, hoping God will grant mercy given humanity's brief existence. The plea assumes divine compassion should account for human frailty.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does life's brevity both warn against wasting time and comfort us that suffering is temporary?
2. What does Job's modest request (comfort 'a little') teach about suffering's effect on our expectations?
3. In what ways does eternal life in Christ transform our perspective on earthly life's brevity?

## Interlinear Text

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הֵלֵא H3808	מְעַט: a little H4592	יָמַי Are not my days H3117	יִחְדָּ ל cease H2308	יִשָּׁ ית then and let me alone H7896	מִן מִן H4480
	וְאֶכֶל יָגֵה that I may take comfort H1082	מְעַט: a little H4592			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Job 14:1** (Parallel theme): Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

**Psalms 39:13** (Parallel theme): O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

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