

Job 10:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?

Analysis

Job appeals to his creaturely status: 'Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?' The verb 'remember' (zakar, זָכַר) pleads for God to recall and act based on remembering. 'Made me as the clay' echoes Genesis 2:7—humans formed from dust. Job appeals to God's craftsmanship: would an artist destroy his work? The phrase 'bring me into dust again' (shub el-aphar, שׁוּב אֶל-עָפָר) refers to death, reversing creation.

Job's appeal assumes God's creative work implies ongoing care—if God invested effort creating, why destroy? The logic seems sound: craftsmen preserve their work. But Job misunderstands God's purposes in suffering—it isn't destruction but refinement. Potter imagery throughout Scripture shows God sometimes breaks and remakes vessels (Jeremiah 18:1-6, Romans 9:20-21) to accomplish better purposes.

The resurrection provides the ultimate answer: God does let us return to dust, but raises us imperishable (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). The 'destruction' Job fears isn't final but transitional—the mortal body returns to dust so the resurrection body can emerge glorified. God remembers we are dust (Psalm 103:14), which moves Him to compassion, not abandonment.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern pottery was common craft—everyone understood the potter-clay relationship. Biblical writers frequently used this imagery for divine

sovereignty and human dependence (Isaiah 29:16, 45:9, 64:8). Job invokes familiar metaphor hoping to evoke divine compassion toward His creation.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing ourselves as God's creation (clay) produce both humility (we're mere dust) and confidence (God values His handiwork)?
2. What does the potter-clay imagery teach about God's right to reshape us through suffering?
3. In what ways does resurrection hope transform our understanding of returning to dust?

Interlinear Text

זָכֹר	נָ א	כִּי	כַח מָר	עָשִׂיתָ נִי	וְאֵל
Remember	H4994	H3588	me as the clay	I beseech thee that thou hast made	H413
H2142			H2563	H6213	
עָפָר	תְּשִׁיבֵנִי:				
me into dust	again				
H6083	H7725				

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 2:7 (Parallel theme): And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Isaiah 64:8 (Parallel theme): But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

Genesis 3:19 (Parallel theme): In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

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.

Jeremiah 18:6 (Parallel theme): O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

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