

Job 13:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

Analysis

Job's declaration "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" represents one of Scripture's highest expressions of unconditional faith. The Hebrew phrase im yiqteleni lo ayachel (אם־יקטלני לו איחל) can be translated "Though he slay me, I will hope in him" or "I will wait for him." The verb qatal (קָטַל) means to kill or slay, acknowledging the possibility that God might take Job's life. Yet the verb yachal (יָחַל) means to wait, hope, or trust with confident expectation—Job commits to trusting God even unto death.

Some Hebrew manuscripts read lo (לא, "not") instead of lo (לו, "to him"), yielding "I have no hope," but most English translations follow the Masoretic pointing supporting "yet will I trust in him." The theological statement is profound either way: even if Job has no earthly hope remaining, he will maintain his integrity before God. The second clause "but I will maintain mine own ways before him" uses the verb yakach (יָקַח), meaning to argue, reason, or prove one's case. Job refuses to confess false guilt to satisfy his friends' theology.

This verse encapsulates Job's paradoxical position: he trusts God absolutely while simultaneously demanding vindication. His faith doesn't require understanding God's purposes or receiving explanations for suffering. Job models faith that persists through darkness, confusion, and apparent divine hostility. This anticipates Christ's cry from the cross—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—where the Suffering Servant trusts the Father even when feeling

abandoned. Hebrews 11's heroes of faith demonstrated similar trust, "not receiving the promises" yet dying in faith.

Historical Context

Job 13 appears in the middle section of the book where Job responds to his friends' accusations. After Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar repeatedly insist Job's suffering proves hidden sin, Job maintains his innocence while expressing willingness to die rather than confess false guilt. This verse forms the climax of Job's defense of his integrity against his friends' relentless accusations.

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature generally taught that the righteous prosper and the wicked suffer. Job's situation violated this formula, creating theological crisis. His friends could only maintain their worldview by declaring Job secretly wicked. Job's refusal to accept their diagnosis—even at the cost of social isolation and potential death—demonstrates extraordinary moral courage. In honor-shame cultures, maintaining one's reputation was paramount, yet Job was willing to appear arrogant and stubborn rather than compromise truth.

The historical context of suffering righteous individuals challenged simplistic retribution theology. Later biblical books address this problem (Psalms 37, 73; Habakkuk), but Job confronts it most directly. The verse has sustained persecuted believers throughout church history—martyrs who trusted God while facing execution, believers enduring inexplicable loss without losing faith. Reformers cited Job as a model of trusting God's sovereignty even when His purposes seem inscrutable. The passage teaches that mature faith doesn't depend on immediate vindication or understanding but rests in God's character alone.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to trust God when circumstances make His goodness difficult to see?
2. How does Job's willingness to die while maintaining his integrity challenge us in smaller matters of honesty and principle?
3. What is the difference between Job's arguing with God and a faithless person's complaint against God?
4. How does this verse address the problem of trusting God when prayers seem unanswered and suffering continues?
5. In what ways does Job's faith prefigure Christ's trust in the Father even unto death on the cross?

Interlinear Text

פָּנִים	אֶל	אָרֶךְ	אָרֶבֶת	אָרֶבֶת	אָרֶבֶת	אָרֶבֶת	אָרֶבֶת	אָרֶבֶת
Though	he slay	H3808	me yet will I trust	H389	mine own ways	H413	before	
H2005	H6991		H3176		H1870		H6440	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 23:4 (Parallel theme): Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Job 23:10 (Parallel theme): But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

1 John 3:20 (Parallel theme): For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

Job 27:5 (Parallel theme): God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.

Proverbs 14:32 (Parallel theme): The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.

Job 13:18 (Parallel theme): Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified.

Job 40:8 (Parallel theme): Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

Job 40:2 (Parallel theme): Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

Job 16:21 (Parallel theme): O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!

Job 7:6 (Parallel theme): My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.