

Job 13:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.

Analysis

'How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.' Job demands specificity. He wants to know his 'iniquities' (אֲוֹנוֹתַי, avonotay), 'sins' (חַטֹּאתַי, chataot), and 'transgression' (עֲשָׂוָי, pesha—rebellion, revolt). The three terms cover different aspects of sin: missing the mark, guilt/punishment, and willful rebellion. Job isn't claiming sinlessness (7:21) but demanding his accusers specify charges. This is legally and pastorally wise: vague accusations can't be answered or corrected. The friends make general accusations; Job demands evidence. The Reformed practice of specific confession rather than vague admission of 'sinfulness' reflects this wisdom.

Historical Context

Ancient legal practice required specific accusations, not vague character assassination. Job here appeals to proper legal procedure, demanding his accusers provide evidence for their claims.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Why is it important to distinguish between general acknowledgment of sinfulness and specific accusations?
2. How do vague accusations harm both accused and accuser?

Interlinear Text

לִּי כַּמֶּה	עֲוֹנוֹתַי	וְחַטָּאתַי	כְּשָׁעַי
<small>H4100</small>	<small>H0</small>	How many are mine iniquities	and my sin
	<small>H5771</small>	<small>H2403</small>	my transgression
			<small>H6588</small>
וְחַטָּאתַי	הִדְעֵנִי:		
and my sin	make me to know		
<small>H2403</small>	<small>H3045</small>		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 139:23 (Parallel theme): Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: