

Job 14:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?

Analysis

Job contrasts potential future grace with present experience: 'For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?' In Job's imagination of restoration, God numbers steps not to judge but to guide. Yet presently, he feels God watches only to condemn. The Hebrew 'shamar' (watch over) can mean both 'guard protectively' and 'observe suspiciously.' Job longs for interpretation to shift from the latter to the former.

Historical Context

The concept of God numbering or counting human actions appears throughout wisdom literature (Psalm 56:8, 139:16). Whether this accounting brings comfort or fear depends on one's understanding of God's character and purposes.

Related Passages

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

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does our perception of God's attention to our lives shift based on whether we see Him as judge or Father?
2. What difference does it make to believe God watches over you to protect rather than merely to judge?
3. How does justification by faith resolve the fear of God's observation of our sins?

Interlinear Text

עַל תִּשְׁמַר רַא תָּהַל אָשָׁעַד וְעַתָּה תִּסְפֶּר וְרַא
H3588 H6258 my steps For now thou numberest H6806 H5608
H3808 dost thou not watch H8104 H5921

מִתְּעִנָּדָה

over my sin

H2403

Additional Cross-References

Job 10:6 (Sin): That thou enquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin?

Job 31:4 (Parallel theme): Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?

Job 34:21 (Parallel theme): For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.

Proverbs 5:21 (Parallel theme): For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

Job 33:11 (Parallel theme): He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.

Jeremiah 32:19 (Parallel theme): Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:

