

Job 16:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my horn in the dust.

Analysis

Job mourns in ashes: 'I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my horn in the dust.' Sackcloth sewn to skin suggests permanent mourning—not temporary grief but seemingly endless sorrow. The 'horn' represented strength and honor (Psalm 89:17). Defiling it in dust indicates complete humiliation and loss of dignity. Ancient mourning rituals expressed internal realities externally. Job's mourning is both ritual and authentic experience of devastation.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern mourning involved sackcloth (coarse goat hair cloth), ashes, and sitting in dust. These practices communicated grief to community and expressed personal devastation. Duration indicated severity—Job's extended mourning reflects his profound loss.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do we honor grief's process rather than rushing to premature comfort?

2. What is the value of external expressions of internal sorrow?
3. How does our culture's discomfort with prolonged mourning differ from biblical models?

Interlinear Text

שַׁק	תָּ פָרַתִּי	עַלִּי	גִלְדִּי	וְעַל לִתִּי	בְּעָפָר	קַרְנִי:
sackcloth	I have sewed	H5921	upon my skin	and defiled	in the dust	my horn
H8242	H8609		H1539	H5953	H6083	H7161

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 37:34 (Parallel theme): And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

Psalms 7:5 (Parallel theme): Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.

Isaiah 22:12 (Parallel theme): And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:

Psalms 75:5 (Parallel theme): Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.

1 Kings 21:27 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.