

Job 16:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.

Analysis

Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high. In the depths of his suffering, Job makes a profound declaration of faith that transcends his immediate circumstances. The Hebrew word *ed* (עֵד, "witness") refers to one who testifies on behalf of another in legal proceedings, while *sahad* (שָׁהַد, "record" or "advocate") denotes one who vouches for another's integrity.

This passage represents a pivotal moment in Job's theological journey. Despite his friends' accusations and his own confusion about God's purposes, Job affirms that somewhere in heaven there exists a witness who knows his innocence and will vindicate him. This heavenly witness stands in stark contrast to his earthly accusers. The phrase "on high" (bammarom, בָּמָרֹם) emphasizes the transcendent, divine nature of this advocate.

Many Christian interpreters see this as a prophetic glimpse of Christ as our heavenly advocate (1 John 2:1). Job's faith reaches beyond present suffering to grasp an unseen reality—that God Himself, or one appointed by God, will ultimately vindicate the righteous. This anticipates the New Testament revelation of Jesus as our mediator and intercessor who pleads our case before the Father.

Historical Context

The Book of Job is considered one of the wisdom literature masterpieces, likely composed during the patriarchal period (2000-1500 BCE) though debated by

scholars. The legal terminology in this passage reflects ancient Near Eastern court procedures where witnesses and advocates played crucial roles in vindicating the accused.

In Job's cultural context, reputation and honor were paramount. False accusations could destroy a person's standing in the community. Job's appeal to a heavenly witness would have resonated with ancient readers who understood the importance of credible testimony in legal disputes. Unlike Mesopotamian literature where humans had no real advocate before capricious gods, Job's declaration reveals a revolutionary concept—that heaven itself contains one who will testify to human righteousness.

This passage has profoundly influenced Jewish and Christian theology regarding divine justice, human suffering, and heavenly advocacy. The rabbis debated the identity of this witness, with some suggesting it was God Himself, others an angel. Christian tradition has largely identified this witness as a pre-incarnate appearance or prophecy of Christ the Mediator.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Job's confidence in a heavenly witness challenge our response to false accusations or misunderstanding?
2. In what ways does Christ fulfill the role of the heavenly witness and advocate that Job longed for?
3. What does this passage teach us about maintaining faith when our circumstances seem to contradict God's goodness?
4. How can we apply Job's example of looking beyond earthly judgment to heavenly vindication in our daily lives?
5. What does Job's declaration reveal about the nature of faith that persists even in profound suffering and confusion?

Interlinear Text

בָּשָׁמָן יְמִינֵךְ עַד־יְמִינֵךְ
is in heaven Also now behold my witness and my record

H1571 H6258 H2009 H8064 H5707 H7717

בָּרָקִים:

is on high

H4791

Additional Cross-References

Romans 1:9 (Witness): For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

2 Corinthians 11:31 (Parallel theme): The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

Genesis 31:50 (Witness): If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee.

1 Thessalonians 2:10 (Witness): Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

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