

Job 16:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.

Analysis

'When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.' Job contemplates death's approach: 'a few years' (שְׁנָוֹת מִסְפָּר, shenot mispar—numbered years), then 'the way whence I shall not return' (וְאֵצֶן לֹא-אָשׁוּב, ve'orach lo-ashuv). This echoes Ecclesiastes 12:5 and Psalm 39:13. Death appears as a one-way journey (from Job's earthly perspective). Yet even here, facing apparent finality, Job addresses God, seeks vindication (previous verses), and maintains prayer. Mortality awareness should drive us to God, not away from Him. The Reformed emphasis on memento mori (remember you must die) isn't morbid but realistic, orienting us toward eternal realities. Job's facing death honestly produces not despair but urgent appeal for justice.

Historical Context

Ancient peoples understood death as crossing a boundary from which none return (2 Samuel 12:23). This awareness intensified the urgency of Job's appeal for vindication before death made it impossible.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does awareness of death's approach shape our relationship with God?
2. What changes when we face suffering knowing time is limited?

Interlinear Text

שָׁנֶת	מִסְפָּר	וְאֵת	בְּחֵן	לֹא	וְאַתָּה	אַשְׁר
years	When a few	are come	the way		whence I shall not return	
H3588	H4557	H857	H734	H3808		H7725
H8141						
אֶתְלָהָה:						
then I shall go						

Additional Cross-References

Job 14:10 (Parallel theme): But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

Job 14:14 (Parallel theme): If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

Job 14:5 (Parallel theme): Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;