Job 17:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me.

Analysis

'My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me.' Job's lament intensifies: 'breath' (יְחַר, ruchi—spirit) is 'corrupt' (חֻבָּלָה, chubbalah—ruined, destroyed), 'days' (יְחַי, yamay) are 'extinct' (יְחַעָּכוּ, niz'akhu—extinguished, snuffed out), 'graves' (קַבְּרִים, qevarim) await. The triple parallelism emphasizes complete deterioration—spirit, time, and body all failing. This is depression's language, describing the feeling of imminent death. Job isn't exaggerating but expressing genuine death-proximity. The Psalms model such lament (Psalm 88:3-5). The Reformed pastoral tradition recognizes that faith doesn't preclude despair's expression. Job's honesty about his condition doesn't negate faith but exercises it by continuing to address God.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern lament literature used similar imagery of extinction and graves to describe the experience of being near death, whether literally or metaphorically through severe suffering.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

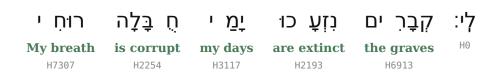
1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

- 1. How do we minister to those who genuinely feel near death, whether physically or emotionally?
- 2. What does it mean that Scripture preserves such despairing language?

Interlinear Text



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