

Job 19:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My breath is strange to my wife, though I intreated for the children's sake of mine own body.

Analysis

'My breath is strange to my wife, though I intreated for the children's sake of mine own body.' Job's isolation extends to intimate relationships: his 'breath' (רוח, ruchi) is 'strange' (זרה, zarah—alien, foreign) to his wife, despite entreaties for sake of 'children of mine own body' (בנֵי בָתִי, beney batni). His disease makes him repulsive even to his wife. Some scholars suggest this refers to bad breath from disease; others see emotional alienation. Either way, marital intimacy is destroyed. Suffering isolates, breaking closest bonds. This anticipates Christ's 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Total isolation, even from intimates, characterizes extreme suffering. Job's experience, though not salvific like Christ's, reflects suffering's alienating power.

Historical Context

Ancient culture valued family intimacy and children highly. Job's alienation from his wife and loss of children would compound his suffering with profound social and emotional isolation.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does suffering isolate us from those closest to us?
2. What does Christ's experience of total abandonment mean for our isolation?

Interlinear Text

לְבָבִי יְהוָה וְלֹא־אֲשֶׁת־יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה
My breath is strange to my wife for the children's

H7307

H2114

H802

H2603

H1121

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sake of mine own body

H990

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