

Job 19:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

Analysis

Job's physical condition is catastrophic: 'My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.' The vivid description—bones visible through skin, barely surviving—communicates extreme emaciation and suffering. 'Skin of my teeth' (proverbial phrase originating here) means narrowest escape. Job describes someone barely clinging to life. Yet this near-death experience precedes his greatest declaration of resurrection hope.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern medicine recognized wasting diseases and their devastating effects. Job's description matches advanced disease—skin lesions, weight loss, extreme pain. That he survives at all seems miraculous, hence 'escaped with the skin of my teeth.'

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does physical deterioration test faith in ways other trials don't?

2. What does it mean that Job's greatest faith declaration comes from his lowest physical point?
3. How does suffering that threatens life itself clarify what we truly believe?

Interlinear Text

בָּעֹר	וּבְבָשָׁרִי	דָּבַקָה	עֲצָמִי	וְאֶתְמַלֵּטָהּ	בָּעֹר
to my skin	and to my flesh	cleaveth	My bone	and I am escaped	to my skin
H5785	H1320	H1692	H6106	H4422	H5785

שִׁנָּי:
of my teeth
H8127

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 102:5 (Parallel theme): By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.

Lamentations 4:8 (Parallel theme): Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick.