

Job 19:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths.

Analysis

He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass (אָרְחִי גָדַר וְלֹא אֶעְבּוֹר, orchi gadar welo' e'evor)—The verb גָדַר (gadar, 'to wall up, fence') describes complete blockage. Job portrays God as actively obstructing every path forward—a reversal of Psalm 23's 'paths of righteousness.' What Job experiences as divine hostility is actually sovereign governance he cannot yet comprehend.

And he hath set darkness in my paths (וְעֵל־נְתִיבוֹתַי חֹשֶׁךְ יָשִׁים)—The Hebrew חֹשֶׁךְ (choshek, 'darkness') implies not just absence of light but moral confusion and divine hiddenness. Job's complaint echoes Lamentations 3:2: 'He hath led me, and brought me into darkness.' Yet this same darkness becomes the womb of faith—by 19:25, Job will confess his Redeemer lives despite seeing no light.

Historical Context

Ancient travelers depended on clear paths and light for safe passage. Job's metaphor of fenced ways and darkness would resonate with his original audience's experience of being stranded in wilderness—helpless, disoriented, and vulnerable.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. When has God seemed to block every path forward in your life? How did you respond?
2. How can Job's honesty about experiencing God's ways as dark encourage those in spiritual confusion?
3. What is the relationship between the 'darkness' of Job 19:8 and the faith confession of Job 19:25?

Interlinear Text

אֶרְחֵי י	גָּדַר	וְלֹא	אֶעֱבֹר	וְעַל	גְּתִיבוֹתַי י
my way	He hath fenced up	H3808	that I cannot pass	H5921	in my paths
H734	H1443		H5674		H5410
חֹשֶׁךְ	וַיִּשֶׂם:				
darkness	and he hath set				
H2822	H7760				

Additional Cross-References

Job 3:23 (Parallel theme): Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?

Lamentations 3:7 (Parallel theme): He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy.

Psalms 88:8 (Parallel theme): Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.

Lamentations 3:9 (Parallel theme): He hath inclosed my ways with hewn stone, he hath made my paths crooked.

Proverbs 4:19 (Darkness): The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

Hosea 2:6 (Parallel theme): Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.

Isaiah 50:10 (Darkness): Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

Job 30:26 (Darkness): When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.

Jeremiah 23:12 (Darkness): Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 13:16 (Darkness): Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

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