

Job 21:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hear diligently my speech, and let this be your consolations.

Analysis

Job requests consolations (תַּנְחֻמוֹתֵיכֶם, tanchumotekem), exposing the failure of his friends' comfort. The verb nasa (נָשָׂא, "suffer") means to bear or carry—Job asks them to simply bear with him, to endure his speech. True comfort requires patient listening, not premature answers. The Reformed tradition recognizes that the ministry of presence often supersedes the ministry of words. Job's request echoes the New Testament call to "weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15) before rushing to theological explanation. The friends' failure to provide genuine comfort foreshadows the need for a mediator who truly understands suffering—ultimately fulfilled in Christ, our sympathetic high priest (Hebrews 4:15).

Historical Context

The concept of tanchumim (consolations) was central to Jewish mourning practices. The book's opening showed Job's friends initially sitting silently with him for seven days—a proper expression of comfort. But their speeches abandoned consolation for condemnation. Ancient wisdom recognized that suffering required companionship more than explanation, making the friends' failure all the more tragic.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Job's request for sufferance rather than solutions challenge our impulse to immediately "fix" others' problems?
2. What is the relationship between theological truth and pastoral sensitivity in ministering to the suffering?
3. How does Christ fulfill the role of true comforter that Job's friends failed to provide?

Interlinear Text

שְׂמָעוּ	שְׂמָעוּ	מִלְּתִי	וְתִהְיֶה	אֵת	זֶה	וּמְתִיכֶם:
Hear	Hear	my speech	H1961	H2063		and let this be your consolations
H8085	H8085	H4405				H8575

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 2:1 (Parallel theme): Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.