

# Job 21:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth.

## Analysis

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**Mark me, and be astonished** פָנוּ-אָלִי וְבָשָׁמוּ (panu-alyi vehashamu)—The verb panah (פָנוּה) means to turn or face, demanding undivided attention. Shamem (בָשָׁם) conveys horror, devastation, or appalled shock. Job isn't asking for sympathy but for his friends to confront the reality that will shatter their theology.

**Lay your hand upon your mouth**—This gesture signifies stunned silence (Judges 18:19, Micah 7:16). Job's coming argument about wicked prosperity will be so overwhelming that honest observers must fall silent. The phrase anticipates God's eventual rebuke of the friends (42:7) and foreshadows Job's own response when God speaks from the whirlwind (40:4). Wisdom begins when human explanations cease and we acknowledge mystery beyond our comprehension.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern wisdom emphasized observable patterns—righteous actions produce blessing, wickedness brings curse. Job's argument that observable reality contradicts this pattern constituted a radical challenge. The gesture of covering the mouth appears in contexts of divine revelation overwhelming human understanding (Isaiah 52:15). Job's friends claimed to speak for God, but Job predicts they'll be silenced by facts.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. When has observable reality challenged your theological assumptions? How did you respond?
2. What does the gesture of covering the mouth teach about proper humility before mysteries we cannot solve?
3. How can we distinguish between legitimate questions that challenge faulty theology versus doubt that undermines faith?

## Interlinear Text

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פָה: עַל יָדך וְעַל יְדֵךְ אֵלֶיךְ וְאֵלֶיךְ  
Mark H413 **me and be astonished** H8074 **and lay** H7760 **your hand** H3027 H5921 **upon your mouth** H6310

## Additional Cross-References

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**Job 29:9** (Parallel theme): The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth.

**Job 40:4** (Parallel theme): Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

**Judges 18:19** (Parallel theme): And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?

**Proverbs 30:32** (Parallel theme): If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.

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