

Job 21:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.

Analysis

Even when I remember I am afraid (וְאַמְזַכְּרָתִי וְנַכְּלַתִּי, ve'aim-zakharti venivhalti)—The verb zakar means to remember or call to mind, while bahal (בָּהָל) conveys being terrified or dismayed. What terrifies Job isn't his suffering but the theological implications of what he observes: God permits the wicked to prosper.

Trembling taketh hold on my flesh (וְאַחֲזֵ בָּשָׁרִי פָּלָצּוֹת, ve'achaz besari pallatsut)—The word pallatsut (פָּלָצּוֹת) means shuddering or horror. Job's physical reaction mirrors his spiritual crisis. If retribution theology is false—if the wicked can prosper without punishment—then God's moral governance of the universe appears compromised. This existential terror exceeds physical pain. Job glimpses the abyss that opens when simple answers fail, anticipating the mystery God will present in chapters 38-41.

Historical Context

Job articulates what philosophers later called 'the problem of evil.' Ancient Near Eastern cultures explained suffering through divine-human reciprocity: sacrifice and obedience secured blessing, while sin brought curse. Job's observation that this equation doesn't always hold threatened the theological foundation of his world. His terror reflects not weak faith but honest grappling with theodicy—how to affirm God's justice when evidence seems contradictory.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Have you experienced theological terror when reality didn't match what you believed about God? How did you navigate that crisis?
2. What does Job's honest expression of fear teach about authentic faith versus pretending we have all the answers?
3. How can wrestling with difficult theological questions strengthen rather than weaken faith?

Interlinear Text

בְּ שָׁרֵי אָמֵן
H518 Even when I remember H2142 H926 H270 H1320

וְנִבְכַּתְּ לֹתִי
I am afraid taketh hold on my flesh

פְּלִצּוּתִים
and trembling
H6427

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