

Job 23:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

Analysis

My foot hath held his steps (בָּאַשּׁוּר אָחֶזָּה רָגְלִי, ba'ashuro achazah ragli)—Achaz (held fast, seized) describes tenacious grip. The ashur (step, path) represents God's prescribed way for righteous living. Job claims his regel (foot) firmly gripped the divine path, suggesting careful, deliberate obedience rather than casual religiosity. This echoes Psalm 17:5: 'Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.'

His way have I kept, and not declined (דַּרְכִּי שָׁמַרְתִּי וְלֹא-אָטָה, darko shamarti v'lo-at)—Derek (way, path) refers to God's moral direction. Shamar (keep, guard, observe) implies vigilant preservation, the same verb used for keeping God's commandments. Natah (decline, turn aside) means deviation or wandering. Job asserts unwavering fidelity—he neither abandoned God's way nor drifted from it through negligence. This self-testimony isn't self-righteousness but appeals to covenant integrity, knowing God Himself witnesses truthfulness (Job 1:8).

Historical Context

This declaration comes after Job's friends repeatedly insist that suffering proves hidden sin. Job's appeal to his own integrity would seem arrogant except that the prologue reveals God Himself commended Job's righteousness (1:8, 2:3). In ancient covenant culture, oath-taking and self-testimony carried weight when backed by witnesses. Job essentially puts himself under oath, inviting divine judgment if his claim proves false.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Job's claim to have 'held fast' to God's path inform how we should pursue obedience?
2. What's the difference between Job's righteous self-testimony and self-righteous boasting?
3. How does walking in God's ways provide confidence when facing unjust accusations or unexplained suffering?

Interlinear Text

אָתָּה שֶׁמֶן רְתִי יָרַכְתִּי אֶחָזֶת הַבָּנָל וְאֶחָזֶת בְּאַשְׁרָה
his steps hath held My foot his way have I kept and not declined
H838 H270 H7272 H1870 H8104 H3808 H5186

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 44:18 (Parallel theme): Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;

Psalms 17:5 (Parallel theme): Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

Psalms 125:5 (Parallel theme): As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.

Job 17:9 (Parallel theme): The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

Romans 2:7 (Parallel theme): To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

2 Corinthians 1:12 (Parallel theme): For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

Psalms 36:3 (Parallel theme): The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.

Zephaniah 1:6 (Parallel theme): And them that are turned back from the LORD; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor enquired for him.

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