

Job 23:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

Analysis

Therefore am I troubled at his presence (עַל־כֵּן מִפְּנֵי אַבְהֵל, al-ken mippanav ebahel)—The verb bahal (בָּהַל) means "to be terrified, dismayed, horrified." The preposition min-panav (from His face/presence) indicates God Himself is the source of terror. This is the *mysterium tremendum*—the overwhelming terror of the holy. Job experiences what Isaiah felt: "Woe is me!" (Isaiah 6:5). The phrase **when I consider, I am afraid of him** (אֶתְבוֹנֵן וְאֶפְחַד מִמֶּנּוּ) uses pachad (פָּחַד), profound dread. The verb bin (בִּין, "consider") shows this isn't ignorant superstition but theological reflection leading to terror.

Job's fear is theodicy's dark night: the righteous trembling before God without assurance of His favor. This is Israel's existential crisis before the gospel. Hebrews 12:28-29 answers: we have received grace, therefore let us serve with reverence and godly fear, "for our God is a consuming fire." The same fire that terrified Job purifies believers (1 Peter 1:7).

Historical Context

The fear of God (yirat Yahweh) is Wisdom Literature's foundation (Proverbs 1:7, 9:10). But Job experiences terror, not reverential awe. Ancient Near Eastern texts portray divine-human encounters as terrifying. Israel's uniqueness was confidence in covenant relationship. Job's terror reflects covenant crisis—he cannot feel God's favor despite his righteousness, foreshadowing Christ's cry of dereliction (Mark 15:34).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What is the biblical distinction between reverential fear of God and terror?
2. How does the gospel transform our approach to God's presence from dread to confidence (Hebrews 4:16)?
3. When you feel distant from God's favor, how does Job's honesty encourage you?

Interlinear Text

עַל	כִּי	מִפְּנֵי	אֲבִי	אֶתְבּוֹן	וְאֶפְחָד
H5921	H3651	H6440	H926	H995	H6342
at his presence		Therefore am I troubled	when I consider	I am afraid	

תִּמְנָנִי
H4480

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:120 (Parallel theme): My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.