

Job 29:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me:

Analysis

When the ear heard me, then it blessed me (ozen זָעַן, ear; shama שָׁמַע, to hear; ashar אָשָׁא, to call blessed/happy)—Job's reputation spread through oral report. Those who merely heard of Job pronounced him blessed without even witnessing his deeds firsthand. **And when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me** (ayin עַיִן, eye; ra'ah רָאָה, to see; ud עוּד, to bear witness/testify)—eyewitnesses testified to Job's righteousness. This ear/eye parallelism emphasizes both hearsay and firsthand testimony confirmed Job's character.

The verse structure echoes Hebrew legal procedure requiring multiple witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15). Both what people heard about Job and what they personally observed corroborated his integrity—no gap existed between reputation and reality. The language anticipates the Servant Songs in Isaiah, where witnesses testify to the Suffering Servant's character (Isaiah 53:1-3). Job's universal acclaim makes his subsequent rejection more tragic—the same mouths that blessed him will later accuse him. This verse also foreshadows the testimony theme crucial to Job's complaint: he demands that God bear witness to his innocence (Job 16:19), and ultimately God does testify that Job 'spoke of me the thing that is right' (Job 42:7).

Historical Context

Oral culture in the ancient Near East meant reputation spread through storytelling and testimony. A person's name and renown constituted their social capital. Job's

fame extended beyond his immediate community—he was 'the greatest of all the men of the east' (Job 1:3). The ear/eye witness formula reflects legal testimony procedures where both hearsay and direct observation carried weight in establishing truth. Job's culture valued honor and shame intensely, making public blessing a treasured possession and public disgrace devastating—precisely what Job will experience.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Does your private character match your public reputation, or would eyewitnesses testify differently than hearsay suggests?
2. How does Job's loss of public blessing despite unchanged character challenge the assumption that God always vindicates the righteous immediately?
3. What does this verse teach about the importance of maintaining integrity in both reputation and reality?

Interlinear Text

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|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| כִּי | אֵזְנוֹ | שָׁמְעָה | וַתְּבָרֵךְ נִי | וְעַיִן | כִּי רָאָה |
| H3588 | When the ear | heard | me then it blessed | me and when the eye | saw |
| | H241 | H8085 | H833 | H5869 | H7200 |
| וַתִּעֲדֵנִי: | | | | | |
| me it gave witness | | | | | |
| H5749 | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Luke 4:22 (Witness): And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

Job 31:20 (Blessing): If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;

Proverbs 29:2 (Parallel theme): When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

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