

Job 29:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.

Analysis

They waited for me as for the rain (וַיִּחַלוּ כְּמָטָר לִי, veyichalu chamatar li)—Yachal (waited) with matar (rain) creates the image of farmers scanning the sky with eager anticipation. In Palestine's climate, rain meant survival; its absence meant famine. Job's counsel was awaited with the same life-or-death urgency.

Opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain (וּפִיהֶם פָּעְרוּ לְמַלְקוֹשׁ, ufihem pa'aru lemalkosh)—Pa'ar (opened wide) suggests gaping or opening to maximum capacity, used of the earth opening to swallow Korah (Numbers 16:32). The malkosh (latter rain) fell in March-April, crucial for ripening grain before harvest. People absorbed Job's words as thirsty ground drinks in the spring rains (compare Zechariah 10:1). This verse intensifies verse 22's gentle dew into the season's critical downpour.

Historical Context

Israel's agricultural calendar depended on two rainy seasons: the early rains (October-November) for plowing and planting, and the latter rains (March-April) for crop maturation before the dry summer. The latter rain was especially critical—its failure meant crop failure regardless of the early rains' success. James 5:7 uses this same agricultural pattern to teach patient waiting. Job's listeners understood this existential dependence.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does the 'latter rain' metaphor reveal about the timing and necessity of godly counsel?
2. How does anticipating wise words 'as for rain' differ from casual entertainment by speakers?
3. In what spiritual 'season' do you most need the latter rain of God's wisdom to bring your growth to maturity?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּחַלּוּ	כַּמֶּטֶר	לִי	וּפִיהֶם	פָּעְרוּ
And they waited	for me as for the rain	H0	their mouth	and they opened
H3176	H4306		H6310	H6473

לַמֶּלֶךְ וְשֶׁ:
wide as for the latter rain
H4456

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 6:3 (Parallel theme): Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

Psalms 72:6 (Parallel theme): He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.

Zechariah 10:1 (Parallel theme): Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.

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