

Job 3:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

Analysis

Job's poetic imagery intensifies: let darkness and the shadow of death ('tsalmaveth') claim his birth day. The phrase 'let a cloud dwell upon it' pictures darkness as an occupying force. The 'blackness of the day terrify it' uses Hebrew 'karar' (to dance/writhe), suggesting darkness itself would be convulsed with horror at that day. This hyperbolic language expresses how completely Job wishes his existence could be erased, yet remains within the bounds of lament poetry.

Historical Context

The 'shadow of death' appears frequently in Old Testament poetry, representing not just death but the realm of deepest darkness and divine judgment (Psalm 23:4).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does Job's vivid poetic language teach us about how to express deep anguish to God?

2. How do you balance honest expression of suffering with trust in God's goodness?

Interlinear Text

וְנִתְנֶה הַעֲלָה יְגָאֵל הַוְּנִיר	! צָלָמִית	חַשְׁכָּן	וְנִשְׁכַּן	עַל יְהִי	וְנִתְנֶה הַעֲלָה יְגָאֵל הַוְּנִיר
stain	Let darkness	and the shadow of death	dwell	H5921	it let a cloud
H1350	H2822	H6757	H7931		H6053
terrify	upon it let the blackness	of the day			
H1204	H3650	H3117			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 23:4 (Parallel theme): Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Isaiah 9:2 (Darkness): The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Job 28:3 (Darkness): He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection: the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.

Jeremiah 13:16 (Darkness): Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

Job 24:17 (Parallel theme): For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.

Job 38:17 (Parallel theme): Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

Jeremiah 2:6 (Parallel theme): Neither said they, Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land

of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?

Matthew 4:16 (Darkness): The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

Luke 1:79 (Darkness): To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Hebrews 12:18 (Darkness): For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

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