

Job 30:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.

Analysis

Thou art become cruel to me (נְהַפְכְתָּ לְאַחְזָר לִי, nehpakhta le-akhzar li)—The verb haphak (הִפָּךְ) means 'to turn' or 'transform,' suggesting God has reversed His character toward Job. The adjective akhzar (אַחְזָר) means 'cruel' or 'fierce,' language startling in its directness. Job perceives divine hostility where he once knew tenderness.

With thy strong hand (בְּעֹזְמֶךָ, be-otzem yadkha)—literally 'with the might of your hand.' The term otzem (עֹז) denotes power, strength, or force. Job feels God's omnipotent hand turned against him rather than for him. This echoes Deuteronomy's warnings about the 'strong hand' of divine discipline (Deuteronomy 26:8), but Job lacks understanding of why he's experiencing it. His theology cannot reconcile God's power with apparent abandonment. This lament anticipates Christ's cry of dereliction: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Matthew 27:46)—the righteous suffering divine abandonment they cannot comprehend.

Historical Context

Job 30 concludes Job's final monologue before Elihu's speeches (chapters 32-37). Having described his former honor (chapter 29) and present humiliation (chapter 30:1-15), Job now directly accuses God of cruelty. This bold language shocked ancient readers accustomed to more reverent address, yet the book preserves Job's raw honesty. The patriarchal setting (pre-Mosaic law) means Job lacks the

covenantal framework later Israelites possessed for understanding suffering as discipline or purification.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do you process feelings that God seems cruel or distant during prolonged suffering?
2. What does Job's radical honesty with God teach about authentic prayer versus pious pretense?
3. How can we maintain faith when God's power seems turned against us rather than for us?

Interlinear Text

תְּהִי לְךָ	לֵאמֹר	לִי	בְּעָצְמְךָ	יָדְךָ	תִּשָּׁטְטָנִי
Thou art become	cruel	H0	to me with thy strong	hand	thou opposest
H2015	H393		H6108	H3027	H7852

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 5:6 (Parallel theme): Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: