

Job 31:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?

Analysis

What then shall I do when God riseth up? (וַיָּמָה אֶעֱשֶׂה כִּי־יָקוּם אֱל, u-mah e'eseh ki-yaqum El)—the verb yaqum (יָקַם, riseth up) portrays God arising as judge, echoing Psalm 82:8: "Arise, O God, judge the earth." **When he visiteth** (yifqod, יִפְקֹד) means to inspect, number, or hold accountable—the same term used for divine visitation in judgment or blessing (Exodus 32:34, Jeremiah 6:15).

Job shifts from horizontal accountability (judges, v. 11) to vertical accountability (God). This rhetorical question admits no answer—when God investigates sin, human excuses evaporate. The verse reveals Job's God-consciousness: his primary deterrent to sin wasn't social shame or legal penalty but standing before the Holy One. This anticipates Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Historical Context

The concept of divine visitation (pequddah) pervades Hebrew thought—God actively inspects human affairs. Unlike pagan deities preoccupied with cosmic battles, Yahweh is intimately involved in moral governance. Job's question reflects covenant theology: God will investigate His people's faithfulness. The forensic imagery (God rising as judge) anticipates the final judgment, when every secret thing will be revealed (Ecclesiastes 12:14, Romans 2:16).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does cultivating awareness of God's future 'visitation' guard against present temptation?
2. What answer can you give when God arises to examine your treatment of the vulnerable (Job's concern in vv. 13-23)?
3. How does Job's vertical accountability challenge modern compartmentalization between private behavior and public faith?

Interlinear Text

וְהָ	אֲ, עֲשֶׂה	כִּי	יָקֹם	אֵל	יְהוָה	! פֶּקֶד ד
H4100	What then shall I do	H3588	riseth up	when God	H3588	and when he visiteth
	H6213		H6965	H410		H6485
הָ	אֲשִׁיבָנִי:					
H4100	what shall I answer					
	H7725					

Additional Cross-References

James 2:13 (Parallel theme): For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

Romans 3:19 (References God): Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

