

Job 31:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;

Analysis

Or have eaten my morsel myself alone (וְאָכַל פֶּתַח לְבָדִי, ve-okhal pitti le-vaddi)—pat (פֶּתַח) means a morsel or piece of bread, basic sustenance. **The fatherless hath not eaten thereof** (וְלֹא־אָכַל יָתָם מִמְּנָה, ve-lo akhal yatom mimennah)—yatom (yatām, fatherless) appears 42 times in Scripture, always representing the vulnerable. Job declares he never hoarded food while orphans starved.

This anticipates Jesus's parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), where selfish feasting while the poor suffer brings judgment. The principle appears throughout Scripture: true religion cares for orphans (James 1:27), shares bread with the hungry (Isaiah 58:7), and practices hospitality (Hebrews 13:2). Job's generosity wasn't occasional charity but lifestyle—he couldn't eat while the fatherless went hungry, demonstrating love of neighbor as self.

Historical Context

Ancient Israelite society lacked social safety nets; orphans depended on the compassion of neighbors. The Torah repeatedly commands care for orphans and widows (Exodus 22:22-24, Deuteronomy 10:18, 24:17-21). Job's era predates Sinai, yet he demonstrates the same covenant ethic, suggesting natural law knowledge of justice. The sharing of meals had deep significance—to eat alone while others starved violated community bonds.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Job's inability to enjoy his 'morsel' while orphans starve challenge modern individualism and consumerism?
2. What vulnerable people in your community might be going without while you enjoy abundance?
3. How can the church recover Job's instinct to share basic necessities rather than hoard surplus?

Interlinear Text

אָכַל	לִבְדֵּי	פָתָן	אָכַל	אָכַל
Or have eaten	my morsel	H905	H3808	Or have eaten
H398	H6595			H398
וּמְלֵךְ	מְלֵךְ			
myself alone and the fatherless	H4480			
H3490				

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