

Job 31:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;

Analysis

If I have seen any perish for want of clothing (אם-אָרָא אָוֹד מִבְּלִי לְבוֹשׁ, im-er'eh oved mib-bli levush)—oved (אוֹד, perish) is a participle indicating ongoing suffering. **Any poor without covering** (וְאֵין קְסֻوت לְאַבִּיּוֹן, ve-ein kesut la-evyon)—evyon (אַבִּיּוֹן, poor/needy) appears 61 times in Scripture, denoting the destitute. Kesut (קסوت) means covering or garment, basic protection.

Job addresses the second basic human need (after food, v. 17)—clothing. This anticipates Jesus's teaching: "I was naked, and ye clothed me" (Matthew 25:36). The conditional "if I have seen" implies active looking—Job sought out those in need rather than avoiding them. Isaiah 58:7 commands: "When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him." Job's righteousness wasn't passive non-harm but active intervention, foreshadowing the Good Samaritan's compassion (Luke 10:33-35).

Historical Context

In the ancient Near East, exposure killed. Nights in Judean hill country dropped to freezing; lack of clothing meant death. The Torah required returning a poor man's cloak by sunset (Exodus 22:26-27, Deuteronomy 24:12-13) because it was his only covering. Job's provision of clothing demonstrated life-saving compassion. His wealth (7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels) meant he had abundant wool and resources to clothe the naked.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Job's active seeking of those 'perishing for want of clothing' challenge passive Christianity that waits for needs to appear?
2. What modern equivalents of 'clothing the naked' might God be calling you to address in your community?
3. How does Job's example inform the church's understanding of material care as integral to gospel witness?

Interlinear Text

אֵם אָרְאָה אָבֶד אָרְאָה מְבָלֵל אָבֶד לְבָשָׂר וְאָלֵם
H518 If I have seen H7200 any perish H1097 for want of clothing H3830 H369
without covering or any poor H3682 H34

Additional Cross-References

Job 22:6 (Parallel theme): For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.