

Job 31:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door?

Analysis

Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me (אָפּערֹטֶץ חַמּוֹן רַבָּהּ וּבֹזֵז־מִשְׁפָּחוֹת יִחְתִּינִי, e'erotz hamon rabbah uvuz-mishpachot yechiteni)—**aratz** (אָרֶץ) means to fear or dread, **hamon** (חַמּוֹן) means multitude or crowd, **buz** (בֹּזֵז) means contempt or scorn, and **chatat** (חָתַת) means to terrify or dismay. **That I kept silence, and went not out of the door** (וְאֶדֹם לֹא־אֵצֵא מִפֶּתַח, va'edom lo-etse fatach)—**damam** (דָּמַם) means to be silent or still, and **petach** (פֶּתַח) means door or entrance.

Job denies being silenced by fear of public opinion. He claims he didn't hide transgressions (v. 33) because of fear of social consequences (v. 34). This demonstrates moral courage—doing right regardless of public approval. Proverbs 29:25 warns that fear of man brings a snare, but trusting the Lord brings safety. Jesus commanded fearing God who can destroy both soul and body rather than fearing those who can only kill the body (Matthew 10:28). From a Reformed perspective, Job's freedom from fear of man demonstrates proper fear of God. When we fear God supremely, human opinion loses its power. Job's transparency despite potential social consequences reveals authentic righteousness.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern culture was deeply honor/shame oriented. Public reputation determined social standing and economic opportunity. Families could ostracize members who brought shame. Job's claim that he didn't hide sin from fear of social

consequences demonstrates remarkable courage. His willingness to face public judgment rather than conceal wrongdoing reflects integrity. This countered cultural norms where maintaining honor sometimes trumped truth.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Job's freedom from fear of public opinion challenge our tendency to manage our reputation?
2. What does Job's willingness to face social consequences teach about the relationship between fearing God and fearing man?
3. How can we cultivate the moral courage to do right regardless of how others might respond?

Interlinear Text

כִּי H3588	אָפַר וְיִן H6206	מִן H1995	רַבָּה H7227	וּבֹז H937	מִשְׁפָּחָה H4940	יִחַתְנִי H2865
Did I fear	multitude	a great	or did the contempt	of families	terrify	
וְאִדָּה H1826	לֹא H3808	וְצֵא H3318	פֶּתַח: H6607			
me that I kept silence	and went not out	of the door				

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 23:2 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:

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