

Job 31:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit;

Analysis

If I have walked with vanity (אִם־הַלְּכָתִי עַמְשָׁוָא, im-halachti im-shav)—Halach (walked) with shav (vanity, emptiness, falsehood) describes a lifestyle characterized by worthless pursuits or deceptive dealings. Shav appears in the Third Commandment: 'Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain [lashav]' (Exodus 20:7). Job claims his conduct hasn't been empty or false.

Or if my foot hath hasted to deceit (וְתַחַשׁ עַל־מִרְמָה כִּגְלִי) vatahash al-mirmah ragli)—Chashash (hasted, hurried) with ragl' (my foot) to mirmah (deceit, fraud, treachery) pictures eager rushing toward dishonest gain. Proverbs 6:18 condemns 'feet that be swift in running to mischief.' Job's foot hasn't hastened to fraud—the opposite of the righteous whose 'steps hold fast to thy paths' (Psalm 17:5).

Historical Context

Commercial fraud was a constant temptation in ancient marketplaces where weights and measures could be manipulated (Leviticus 19:35-36, Proverbs 11:1). 'Vanity' and 'deceit' often appeared together in wisdom literature as twin vices of dishonest business practices. Job's self-examination begins with economic integrity, appropriate for a wealthy merchant-patriarch whose dealings involved many transactions.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does 'walking with vanity' differ from occasional lapses into deception?
2. What does the foot 'hastening' to deceit reveal about the heart's eagerness for dishonest gain?
3. In what areas of life might you be 'walking with vanity' without recognizing the emptiness?

Interlinear Text

מִרְמָה הַלְּכָדִים עַמְּךָ בְּלִכְדִּים שׁ אָנָּה עַל תַּחַת חַשְׁבָּן
H518 **If I have walked** H5973 **with vanity** H5921 **to deceit**
H1980 H7723 H2363 H4820

כְּלֵי:

or if my foot

H7272

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 12:11 (Parallel theme): He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.