

Job 33:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.

Analysis

He putteth my feet in the stocks (יָשַׁם בַּסֵּד רַגְלָי, yasem bassad raglai)—Job had complained that God imprisoned him like a criminal (13:27). סֵד (sad, 'stocks') refers to wooden devices that confined feet, preventing movement—punishment for prisoners or slaves. יָשַׁם (yasem, 'putteth') suggests deliberate placement. Job felt trapped, unable to escape his suffering or understand its purpose.

He marketh all my paths (וְיִשְׁמֹר כָּל-אֲרָחוֹתַי, yishmor kol-orchotai)—שָׁמַר (shamar, 'marketh/watcheth') means to guard, observe, or scrutinize. אֲרָח (orach, 'path') refers to one's way of life or conduct. Job perceived God's watchfulness as suspicious surveillance rather than loving care (7:17-20, 10:14). The irony: God does watch His children constantly—but for protection and guidance, not condemnation (Psalm 139:1-18). Job's suffering had distorted his perception of divine providence.

Elihu quotes these complaints to demonstrate Job's theological error: attributing malicious motives to God's sovereign purposes. The same divine actions Job interpreted as hostile imprisonment are actually loving boundaries and attentive care. Suffering had temporarily blinded Job to God's benevolent character.

Historical Context

Imprisonment in stocks was common punishment in the ancient Near East for criminals, rebellious slaves, or prisoners of war (Jeremiah 20:2, 29:26, Acts 16:24). Job, formerly respected and honored (chapter 29), now felt reduced to criminal

status. His physical suffering—boils, loss of family and wealth—seemed like divine punishment without cause. Elihu's task: reframe Job's suffering from punishment to purification, from enmity to education.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. When have you felt God was restricting or watching you suspiciously—how did that affect your faith?
2. How can we distinguish between God's protective boundaries and our perception of imprisonment?
3. What does Psalm 139 teach about God's constant observation of our lives—is it comforting or threatening?

Interlinear Text

יֵשׁ דַּ	בַּסֵּד	רַגְלִי	שָׁמַר	כָּל	אֶרְחוּתִי:
He putteth	in the stocks	my feet	he marketh	H3605	all my paths
H7760	H5465	H7272	H8104		H734

Additional Cross-References

Job 13:27 (Parallel theme): Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.

Job 31:4 (Parallel theme): Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?

