

Job 34:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.

Analysis

Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men. Elihu escalates his accusations, claiming Job associates with evildoers. The Hebrew *halak* (הלך, "goeth/walketh") appears twice, emphasizing habitual conduct rather than isolated incidents. "Company" (*chever*, חֵבֶר) means fellowship, partnership, or alliance. *Po'alei-aven* (פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן, "workers of iniquity") describes those whose occupation is wickedness, while *anshei-resha* (אֲנָשֵׁי רָשָׁע, "wicked men") denotes morally corrupt individuals.

This accusation directly contradicts Job's character established in 1:1 ("eschewed evil") and maintained throughout his suffering. Elihu commits the logical fallacy of guilt by association—because Job questions divine justice (as wicked people might), he must be aligned with the wicked. This reasoning parallels the friends' earlier errors: suffering proves sin, questioning proves wickedness. Yet the prologue reveals Job's suffering validates his righteousness, not his wickedness. Ironically, Job's "companions" throughout the book are his accusatory friends, whose theology proves false (42:7). The verse demonstrates how easily suffering saints can be slandered by those who misunderstand the purposes of affliction. It anticipates accusations against Christ, who was called "friend of publicans and sinners" (Luke 7:34) precisely because He came to save the lost.

Historical Context

Deuteronomy 13:6-8 commanded separation from those who enticed Israel to idolatry, making "walking with the wicked" a serious covenant violation. Psalm 1:1's beatitude blesses those who avoid the counsel, path, and seat of the wicked. Elihu invokes this theology but misapplies it—Job hasn't chosen wicked companions; he's suffering while maintaining righteousness. The accusation reflects how suffering can make the righteous vulnerable to false charges.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How can we avoid the error of judging someone's character by their circumstances rather than their actual conduct?
2. What does Jesus's willingness to associate with sinners teach about the difference between ministry and moral compromise?
3. How does this false accusation against Job warn us against hasty judgments of suffering believers?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵיךְ ח	ל חֲבֵרָה עִם	פַּ עָלִי	אֵל	לִלְכֹת	עִם
Which goeth	in company	with the workers	of iniquity		
H732	H2274	H5973	H6466	H205	H1980
					H5973
אֲנִשִּׁי	רָשָׁע:				
H376	with wicked				
	H7562				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 1:1 (Sin): Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Psalms 26:4 (Parallel theme): I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.

Psalms 50:18 (Parallel theme): When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.

Proverbs 13:20 (Parallel theme): He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

1 Corinthians 15:33 (Evil): Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

Proverbs 2:12 (Evil): To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;

Proverbs 1:15 (Parallel theme): My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: