

Job 40:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

Analysis

Job's response: 'Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.' This first submission acknowledges unworthiness to answer. Job doesn't recant his innocence but recognizes his limited perspective. Silence becomes appropriate response.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom valued knowing when to speak and when to remain silent. Job's hand on mouth signals recognition of proper boundaries.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. When is silence more appropriate than speech before God?
2. What does recognizing your 'vileness' reveal about proper perspective?

Interlinear Text

לִמְזֹן שְׁמַתִּי לְמִזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר בְּבָבָל מִזְבֵּחַ קָרְבָּן הַלְּתִי
H2005 Behold I am vile H7043 H4100 what shall I answer H7725 H3027 mine hand H3926 H7760 upon

גִּיְּנָה
my mouth
H6310

Additional Cross-References

Job 29:9 (Parallel theme): The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth.

Proverbs 30:32 (Parallel theme): If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.

Job 21:5 (Parallel theme): Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth.

Job 42:6 (Parallel theme): Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Isaiah 6:5 (Parallel theme): Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

Genesis 32:10 (Parallel theme): I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

Genesis 18:27 (Parallel theme): And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:

Luke 18:13 (Parallel theme): And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Judges 18:19 (Parallel theme): And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it

better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?

Ezra 9:6 (Parallel theme): And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.

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