

Job 7:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?

Analysis

Job demands respite: 'How long wilt thou not depart from me' (shur, שׁוּר) 'nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?' The idiom of swallowing spittle refers to the briefest moment—Job can't even complete a simple reflexive action before God's scrutiny overwhelms him again. The verb 'depart' (sha'ah, שָׁאַה) means to look away, regard, or turn attention toward—Job pleads for God to look away even momentarily.

The imagery reverses the normal prayer for God's presence (Psalm 27:9, 'Hide not thy face from me'). Job wants God's absence, not His presence—suffering has made divine fellowship unbearable. This illustrates the terror of experiencing God's holiness without mediatorial grace. The Reformed understanding emphasizes that sinful humanity cannot bear unmediated divine presence; we require Christ's mediation (Hebrews 12:18-24).

Job's plea anticipates the gospel solution: Christ bears God's full scrutiny and judgment in our place, so we can experience divine attention as blessing rather than curse. On the cross, Christ cried, 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?'—experiencing the divine abandonment Job craves, so believers never experience it.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern prayers sometimes sought divine distance when the deity's presence brought judgment (compare Jonah fleeing God's presence). Job's request

reflects human inability to sustain direct encounter with the holy without covenant mediation—a theme developed throughout Scripture (Exodus 33:20, Isaiah 6:5).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Why is unmediated divine presence terrifying rather than comforting for sinners?
2. How does Christ's mediatorial work transform God's scrutiny from judgment to fatherly love?
3. What does Job's experience teach about the necessity of Christ as our advocate and mediator?

Interlinear Text

כַּמָּה	לֹא	תִשָּׁעַ ה	מִמֶּנִּי	לֹא	תִרְפֶּנִּי	עַד
How long	H3808	wilt thou not depart	H4480	H3808	from me nor let me alone	H5704
H4100		H8159			H7503	
בִּלְעִי		רִקְיִי				
till I swallow down		my spittle				
H1104		H7536				

Additional Cross-References

Job 9:18 (Parallel theme): He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness.

Job 14:6 (Parallel theme): Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day.

