

Job 7:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.

Analysis

Job's description of insomnia captures the torment of sleepless suffering. The question 'When shall I arise?' (matay akum, מָתָי אָקָם) expresses desperate longing for morning—yet when morning comes, he longs for it to pass. This psychological agony reveals suffering's disorienting power. The phrase 'full of tossings' uses the Hebrew nadad (נָדָד), meaning restless wandering or fleeing, suggesting violent, involuntary movements from pain.

The temporal marker 'unto the dawning of the day' (neshef, נֶשֶׁף) refers to twilight or dawn—Job endures all night awaiting relief that brings only continued misery. This creates a vicious cycle where neither night nor day provides respite. Theologically, this reflects humanity's inability to escape suffering through mere time's passage. Only divine intervention, not temporal progression, brings redemption.

Job's experience foreshadows the psalmists' cries (Psalm 6:6, 'I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim') and anticipates Christ's agony in Gethsemane where the night hours brought intensifying dread. The Reformed tradition recognizes that God sometimes answers prayer not with immediate relief but with sustaining grace through prolonged trial (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern culture practiced sunrise-to-sunset daily rhythms without artificial lighting. Nighttime represented vulnerability to danger and inability to work. For Job, night's normal rest becomes torment, inverting creation's good pattern (Genesis 1:5). This inversion signals creation's subjection to futility through the fall.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 – Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do we maintain faith when time itself seems to offer no relief from suffering?
2. What does Job's honest description of sleepless nights teach us about bringing raw, unedited prayers to God?
3. In what ways does Christ's own nighttime agony in Gethsemane validate and transform the suffering of sleepless saints?

Interlinear Text

אָמַת	מִתְ' אָמַת רְתִי	שָׁכְבָתִי	אָלָמָם	אָמַת	מִתְ' אָמַת רְתִי	שָׁכְבָתִי	אָלָמָם		
H518	When I lie down	I say	H4970	When shall I arise	be gone	H7901	H559	H6965	H4059

בְּנֶשֶׁף: עָדִי יְמִינָה שְׁבַעֲתִי וְלִדְדִי וְלִשְׁבַעֲתִי שְׁבַעֲתִי וְלִדְדִי
unto the dawning of the day H5399
and the night and I am full of tossings to and fro H5704
H6153 H7646 H5076

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 28:67 (Parallel theme): In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

Psalms 77:4 (Parallel theme): Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

Job 17:12 (Parallel theme): They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness.

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