

Job 7:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.

Analysis

Job employs the metaphor of a weaver's shuttle (ereg, אָרֶג) to describe time's swift passage. The shuttle flies back and forth with remarkable speed, creating fabric in what seems an instant—yet Job's days pass with equal rapidity 'without hope' (ephes tiqvah, אֶפֶס תִּקְוָה). The Hebrew ephes means 'nothingness' or 'cessation,' while tiqvah denotes expectation or confident waiting. Job's days hurtle toward death without any confident expectation of relief or meaning.

This verse articulates profound despair: not merely suffering, but suffering without purpose or anticipated resolution. The Reformed tradition distinguishes between trials that produce proven character (Romans 5:3-4) and Job's unique situation where he lacks understanding of his suffering's purpose. His friends will insist his suffering must indicate sin; God will eventually reveal it serves to vindicate divine confidence in Job's integrity. But in this moment, Job sees only meaningless velocity toward death.

The temporal paradox intensifies suffering: days pass both too slowly (verse 4's sleepless nights) and too swiftly (this verse's racing shuttle). Time's dual nature in suffering—simultaneously dragging and flying—reflects fallen temporality. The metaphor anticipates James 4:14, 'For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.'

Historical Context

Weaving was a common ancient Near Eastern craft using horizontal looms with shuttles passing threads between warp and weft. The shuttle's speed made it a natural metaphor for time's passage (compare Psalm 90:9, 'we spend our years as a tale that is told'). Job's artisan imagery reflects his cultured background.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do we maintain hope when days seem to pass swiftly yet meaninglessly toward death?
2. What does Job's 'without hope' teach us about the difference between honest lament and sinful despair?
3. In what ways does the gospel transform our understanding of time's purpose and life's meaning?

Interlinear Text

יָמַי	קָלִילִי	מִנִּי	אֶרְגָּל	וַיֵּשְׂרֹף	בְּאֵין
My days	are swifter		than a weaver's shuttle	and are spent	without
H3117	H7043	H4480	H708	H3615	H657

תִּקְוָה:
hope
H8615

Additional Cross-References

Job 9:25 (Parallel theme): Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good.

Job 17:15 (Hope): And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?

Psalms 144:4 (Parallel theme): Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.

Job 17:11 (Parallel theme): My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.

Proverbs 14:32 (Hope): The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.

1 Peter 1:24 (Parallel theme): For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

Psalms 102:11 (Parallel theme): My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.

Job 6:11 (Hope): What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?

Job 16:22 (Parallel theme): When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.

Job 13:15 (Parallel theme): Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.