

Job 9:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.

Analysis

Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch (אַז בְּשַׁחַת תַּטְבֵּל נִי, az bashachat titb'leni)—despite Job's hypothetical maximum purification (v. 30), God would immediately defile him. The verb 'plunge' (taval, תַּטְבֵּל) means to dip, immerse, or plunge into—the same word used for baptism. 'Ditch' (shachat, תַּחַת) means pit, corruption, or cesspool—a place of sewage and filth, perhaps a dunghill. The image is shocking: immediately after ritual purification, God would dunk Job in sewage.

And mine own clothes shall abhor me (וְתַּעֲבֹזִי שְׁלָמֹתִי, v'ti'avuni salmotai) intensifies the degradation. The verb 'abhor' (ta'av, תַּעֲבֹז) means to detest, loathe, or find abhorrent. Even Job's own garments would recoil from him in revulsion. This personification emphasizes total defilement—so filthy even his clothes reject him. Job's imagery exposes the impossibility of self-justification before God. Isaiah later captures this: 'all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags' (Isaiah 64:6). No human effort can achieve the purity God requires—only Christ's imputed righteousness suffices (Philippians 3:9).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern culture prized ritual purity, requiring washing before approaching deity. Job's shocking image—God deliberately defiling him after cleansing—reverses expected patterns where gods accepted pure worshipers. This theological crisis forced wrestling with deeper questions: How can mortals be

clean before God (Job 25:4)? The book prepares for the gospel answer: God Himself provides the righteousness humans cannot achieve.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Job's vivid imagery of God defiling him despite purification efforts illustrate the doctrine of total depravity?
2. What comfort do believers find in knowing Christ provides the righteousness we cannot achieve?

Interlinear Text

שְׁלֹמֹתִי:	וְאַתָּה	בְּשֵׁחַת	תִּתְּבַלֵּל	נִ	תִּתְּאַבֵּה	וְנִ	וְאַתָּה
Yet	me in the ditch	shalt thou plunge			shall abhor	and mine own clothes	
H227	H7845		H2881		H8581		H8008

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