

Isaiah 26:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.

Analysis

LORD, in trouble have they visited thee (יְהוָה בָּצָר פָּקְדוֹךְ / YHWH batzar peqadukha)—The verb פָּקַד (paqad, "to visit, attend to") here means to seek God. The noun צָר (tzar, "trouble, distress, adversity") describes affliction that drives people to God. Human nature often ignores God during prosperity but cries out during crisis—a pattern throughout Scripture (Judges, Psalms, prophets).

They poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them (צָקוּ לַחֵשׁ מוֹסְרֶךָ לָמוֹ / tzaqu lachash musareka lamo)—The verb צִוַּק (tzuq, "to pour out") suggests urgent, desperate prayer. לַחֵשׁ (lachash) can mean "whisper" or "incantation," possibly indicating prayer so desperate it emerges as anguished whispers. מוֹסֵר (musar, "chastening, discipline") shows God's affliction as pedagogical, not merely punitive—suffering designed to produce repentance and dependence.

Historical Context

Isaiah ministered during multiple crises: the Syro-Ephraimite War (735 BC), fall of northern Israel (722 BC), and Sennacherib's invasion (701 BC). Each crisis tested whether Judah would trust YHWH or political alliances. The pattern: when military threats loomed, the people briefly 'visited' God in prayer, yet often returned to idolatry once danger passed. Isaiah calls for enduring faithfulness, not crisis-driven religiosity. This anticipates Jeremiah's message during Babylonian siege—seek God in genuine repentance, not manipulative bargaining.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Why does trouble often drive us to prayer when prosperity doesn't? What does this reveal about our hearts?
2. How can we cultivate faithful prayer during peaceful seasons, not just desperate prayers during crises?
3. What's the difference between God's chastening (which aims at restoration) and His judgment (which aims at justice)?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה ה	בְּצָר	פָּקְדוֹ וַיָּבֹא	צָקוֹ וַיִּשְׁפְּכוּ	לְחַשְׁתִּי
LORD	in trouble	have they visited	thee they poured out	a prayer
H3068	H6862	H6485	H6694	H3908
	מוֹסְרִיךְ	לְמוֹ:		
	when thy chastening			
	H4148	H0		

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 5:15 (Parallel theme): I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

Psalms 50:15 (Parallel theme): And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.