

# Isaiah 38:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me.

## Analysis

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The simile "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter" describes incoherent groaning in pain—unable to form coherent words. "I did mourn as a dove" adds the dove's mournful cooing, expressing grief. The physical symptom "mine eyes fail with looking upward" depicts exhaustion from looking toward heaven for help. The desperate cry "O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me" is plea for divine intervention. "Undertake" (Hebrew 'arab) means to act as guarantor or advocate, asking God to take responsibility for the situation.

## Historical Context

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Ancient listeners would recognize these bird calls—the crane's harsh cry, swallow's chattering, and dove's mournful coo. The imagery made suffering's expression visceral.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How do we pray when pain overwhelms our ability to form coherent words?
2. What does it mean to ask God to "undertake" for us as our guarantor?
3. How does groaning in the Spirit (Romans 8:26) relate to inarticulate suffering prayer?

## Interlinear Text

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כָּס וּס	עָגוּר	כִּי	אֶצְפֹּץ	אֶהְגֶּה	כִּי־וֶה	וַדֹּל
Like a crane	or a swallow	H3651	so did I chatter	I did mourn	as a dove	fail
H5483	H5693		H6850	H1897	H3123	H1809
עֵינַי	לִמָּוֹם	אֶדְנִי	עֲשֻׁקָה	לִי	עֲרֹבְנִי	
mine eyes	with looking upward	H136	I am oppressed	H0	undertake	
H5869	H4791		H6234		H6148	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 59:11** (Parallel theme): We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.

**Psalms 69:3** (Parallel theme): I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.

**Job 30:29** (Parallel theme): I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.

**Nahum 2:7** (Parallel theme): And Huzzab shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts.

**Ezekiel 7:16** (Parallel theme): But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity.

**Psalms 143:7** (References Lord): Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.

**Psalms 119:82** (Parallel theme): Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?

**Job 17:3** (Parallel theme): Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?

**Lamentations 4:17** (Parallel theme): As for us, our eyes as yet failed for our vain help: in our watching we have watched for a nation that could not save us.

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