

Isaiah 38:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

Analysis

Hezekiah's reflection that God's love 'cast all my sins behind thy back' is a profound statement of substitutionary atonement and divine forgetfulness of confessed sin. The Hebrew implies violent throwing away, anticipating the scapegoat imagery and Christ bearing sin 'far as east from west' (Psalm 103:12). His illness becoming 'for peace' demonstrates Romans 8:28 - God works all things for good.

Historical Context

This psalm was written for temple worship ('stringed instruments' v. 20), making Hezekiah's personal crisis a public liturgical testimony. His fifteen additional years included both faithful building projects and the pride of showing treasures to Babylon (Isaiah 39).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Do you truly believe God has 'forgotten' your confessed sins, or do you keep retrieving them?
2. How has God transformed your 'bitterness' into 'peace' through His sovereign purposes?

Interlinear Text

לְשָׁלֵם	וּמְנַנֵּה	לִ	מִרְאֵה	לִ	מִרְאֵה
H2009 Behold for peace	I had great bitterness	H0	I had great bitterness		
H7965	H7451	H4751			
וְאַתָּה	מִשְׁׁלָתְךָ	מִשְׁׁחָתְךָ	בְּלִ		
H859 but thou hast in love	to my soul	delivered it from the pit	of corruption		
H2836	H5315	H7845	H1097		
כִּי	אַתָּה	גַּיְבָּה	כָּל	סְפָאִים	
H3588 for thou hast cast	behind	thy back	H3605	all my sins	
H7993	H310	H1460	H2399		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 43:25 (Sin): I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Jonah 2:6 (Parallel theme): I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

Psalms 30:3 (Parallel theme): O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

Jeremiah 31:34 (Sin): And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Psalms 86:13 (Parallel theme): For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

Psalms 85:2 (Sin): Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.

Psalms 40:2 (Parallel theme): He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

Psalms 10:2 (Parallel theme): The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

Job 29:18 (Parallel theme): Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand.