

Isaiah 38:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

Analysis

The statement "the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee" reflects Old Testament understanding that conscious worship belongs to earthly life. "They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth" shows that death ends active faith and testimony. This perspective makes earthly life precious as opportunity for worship and witness. The theology is pre-resurrection, lacking New Testament clarity about eternal life, but rightly values present opportunity to glorify God.

Historical Context

This theology appears throughout Old Testament wisdom literature (Psalm 6:5; 88:10-12). Life was precious partly because it offered opportunity to praise God.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does our limited time on earth make each day precious for worship and witness?

2. What does the urgency of praising God while we can teach about prioritizing worship?
3. How does New Testament resurrection hope transform while still affirming life's preciousness?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	לֹא	שָׂא וְלֹא	תִּתְּנוּ	מָוֶת	יְהַלֵּל	לֹא
H3588	H3808	For the grave	cannot praise	thee death	can not celebrate	H3808
		H7585	H3034	H4194	H1984	
יִשְׁכַּר וְ	יֹרְדֵי	בֹר	אֶל	אֱמֶתְךָ:		
cannot hope	thee they that go down	into the pit	H413	for thy truth		
H7663	H3381	H953		H571		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 6:5 (Parallel theme): For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

Ecclesiastes 9:10 (Parallel theme): Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Psalms 30:9 (Resurrection): What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?