

Jeremiah 8:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me.

Analysis

This verse expresses Jeremiah's personal anguish: 'When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me.' The Hebrew *mabligiti* (מְבָלִיגִיתִי) means 'my comfort' or 'when I would refresh myself.' Jeremiah seeks emotional relief from prophetic burden but finds none. 'My heart is faint' (*libbi devai*, לִבִּי דֵבָאי) describes heart-sickness, emotional exhaustion, grief beyond recovery. The phrase 'against sorrow' (*alay yagon*, עַלְיָגֹן) indicates sorrow pressing upon him like a weight. This verse begins Jeremiah's personal lament within the prophetic oracle, revealing the prophet's human struggle with his painful message. Unlike false prophets who delivered comfortable lies, Jeremiah suffered with the truth he proclaimed.

Historical Context

Jeremiah's personal laments (sometimes called his 'confessions') appear throughout the book (11:18-12:6, 15:10-21, 17:14-18, 18:18-23, 20:7-18). These passages reveal the psychological cost of faithful prophetic ministry. Unlike court prophets who enjoyed royal favor for their positive messages, Jeremiah faced constant opposition, imprisonment, and threat of death. His emotional struggle authenticates his message—he didn't want to prophesy doom but was compelled by God's word.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Jeremiah's emotional struggle with his message authenticate rather than undermine prophetic authority?
2. What does this verse teach about the personal cost of faithful ministry that involves unpopular truth?

Interlinear Text

לְבָבِי עַלְיָגָגִי מִבְּלִי גִּגְתִּי
When I would comfort myself against sorrow my heart is faint
H5921 H3015 H3820 H1742

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 22:4 (Parallel theme): Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.

Jeremiah 6:24 (Parallel theme): We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, and pain, as of a woman in travail.

Lamentations 5:17 (Parallel theme): For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim.

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