

Jeremiah 9:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

Analysis

This verse opens chapter 9 with Jeremiah's famous lament: 'Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!' The Hebrew imagery is extravagant—wishing his head were a reservoir (mayim, מַיִם, waters) and his eyes a spring (maqor, מְקוֹר, fountain) of perpetual tears. 'Day and night' (yomam valaylah) indicates continuous, exhausting grief. 'The slain of the daughter of my people' (chalalei bat-ammi, חַלְלֵי בַת־עַמִּי) refers to those killed in coming judgment. Jeremiah wishes he could weep proportionally to the tragedy—but human tears cannot match divine judgment's magnitude. This verse gave Jeremiah his title 'the weeping prophet.'

Historical Context

This verse is sometimes numbered as Jeremiah 8:23 in Hebrew Bibles, showing ancient chapter divisions differed. The verse responds to the previous chapter's prophetic announcements and personal anguish. Jeremiah's weeping contrasts sharply with the hardened, shameless leaders described earlier. His grief authenticates his message and reveals that true prophecy, even of judgment, flows from broken-hearted love rather than vindictive anger.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Jeremiah's overwhelming grief model appropriate response to sin's devastating consequences?
2. What does this verse teach about the emotional cost of faithful ministry that proclaims difficult truth?

Interlinear Text

מִי	יֵת	רֹאשִׁי	מַיִם	וְעֵינַי	מֶקֶד	דִּמְעָה
H4310	Oh that	my head	were waters	and mine eyes	a fountain	of tears
	H5414	H7218	H4325	H5869	H4726	H1832
	וְאֶבְכֶּה	יוֹם	לַיְלָה	אֶת	חֵלְלֵי	בֵּת
	that I might weep	day	and night	H853	for the slain	of the daughter
	H1058	H3119	H3915	H2491	H1323	
	עַמִּי:					
	of my people					
	H5971					

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 13:17 (Parallel theme): But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.

Lamentations 2:11 (Parallel theme): Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city.

Jeremiah 6:26 (Parallel theme): O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.

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