

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, מִקּוֹר, fountain) of perpetual tears. 'Day and night' (yomam valaylah) indicates continuous, exhausting grief. 'The slain of the daughter of my people' (chalalei bat-ammi, חֲלָלִי בָת-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

דְּמֻעַת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ וְרָאשֵׁי מִזְבֵּחַ וְעֵינֵי מִזְבֵּחַ

H4310 Oh that H5414 my head H7218 were waters H4325 and mine eyes H5869 a fountain H4726 of tears H1832

בַּתְּכִלְלָה יְמִינֵי אֲתִי לְלִילָה וְיֻמְמָה וְאַבְכָּה

that I might weep H1058 day H3119 and night H3915 for the slain H853 of the daughter H2491 H1323

עַמִּים:

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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