

Job 16:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.

Analysis

'He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.' Job describes God's apparent hostility: 'teareth' (תַּرְבֵּשׁ, taraf—rips, rends) in 'wrath' (אֹפֶן, apo), 'hateth' (אֹהֵשׁ, setami), 'gnasheth teeth' (חָרָקֵת, charaq—grinds), 'sharpeneth eyes' (יִלְתֹּשֵׁשׁ עֵינָיו, yiltosh eynav—sharpens, focuses gaze). This violent imagery expresses how God's providence feels to Job—like enemy attack. The Reformed tradition acknowledges this dark night of the soul (Psalm 88, Lamentations 3:1-20). Job isn't denying God's goodness metaphysically but describing his experience honestly. Faith includes seasons where God feels like an enemy. The Psalms model this honest lament. Job's raw honesty eventually leads to deeper relationship (42:5).

Historical Context

Ancient lament literature, including Psalms, used similar violent imagery to describe feeling abandoned or attacked by God. Job stands in this tradition of honest, painful prayer.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do we maintain faith when God feels like an enemy?
2. What role does honest expression of feeling abandoned play in spiritual formation?

Interlinear Text

בְּעֵלָה	בְּקַבְעָה	בְּשִׁבְעָמָן	בְּנִי	בְּרַבְעָה	בְּאַגְעָה
me in his wrath	He teareth	who hateth	me he gnasheth		H5921
H639	H2963	H7852	H2786		
בְּשִׁבְעָתָה	אֶצְרָה	שְׁלָטָה	עֵינָה	לִי	
upon me with his teeth	mine enemy	sharpeneth	his eyes		H0
H8127	H6862	H3913	H5869		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 35:16 (Parallel theme): With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

Job 13:24 (Parallel theme): Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?

Lamentations 2:16 (Parallel theme): All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee: they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up: certainly this is the day that we looked for; we have found, we have seen it.

Acts 7:54 (Parallel theme): When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

Psalms 37:12 (Parallel theme): The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

Job 19:11 (Judgment): He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies.

Job 18:4 (Parallel theme): He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?

Hosea 6:1 (Parallel theme): Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org