

Lamentations 3:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones.

Analysis

Bodily affliction described: "My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones" (bilah besari ve-ori shibbar atsmotai). The verb balah (הָלַךְ, "made old, wore out") describes premature aging—suffering ages one beyond years. "Broken bones" (shibbar atsmotai) suggests deep, structural damage. Bones represent strength and framework; their breaking indicates comprehensive physical collapse. Psalm 51:8 uses similar imagery: "the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice"—connection between sin's judgment and physical effects. Job 30:17 echoes: "My bones are pierced in me in the night season." The cumulative effect of verses 1-6 portrays suffering affecting every dimension: emotional (verse

1. , directional (verse)
2. , relational (verse)
3. , physical (verse)
4. , environmental (verse)
5. , and spiritual (verse)
6. .

This comprehensive description demonstrates that when God disciplines, it touches all of life. Nothing remains unaffected. Yet even this severe picture prepares for hope—the same God who causes such suffering has power to restore (3:22-26).

Historical Context

Physical deterioration during siege was documented. Malnutrition causes premature aging—skin loses elasticity, teeth fall out, bones become brittle. Disease spreads rapidly in crowded, unsanitary siege conditions. The imagery also suggests the emotional and spiritual toll. Proverbs 17:22 observes: 'A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.' Depression and trauma manifest physically. Modern understanding of psychosomatic connections confirms what Scripture long recognized—spiritual and emotional states affect physical health. The exile experience aged survivors rapidly. Those who returned decades later were aged beyond their years. Ezra 3:12 mentions 'ancient men, that had seen the first house' weeping—these were perhaps only in their fifties or sixties but described as ancient because the suffering had aged them.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the connection between spiritual affliction and physical deterioration ('made old,' 'broken bones') illustrate the integrated nature of human existence?
2. What does it mean that God's discipline can affect us comprehensively—emotionally, physically, spiritually—and why is this actually evidence of His care?
3. How does awareness that the same God who breaks can also heal (Hosea 6:1, Job 5:18) sustain hope even in severe suffering?

Interlinear Text

בְּלֹה בָּשָׂר וְעֹור יְשַׁב רַעֲמֹתִים עַצְמוֹתִים
hath he made old My flesh and my skin he hath broken my bones
H1086 H1320 H5785 H7665 H6106

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 38:13 (Parallel theme): I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.

Psalms 51:8 (Parallel theme): Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Jeremiah 50:17 (Parallel theme): Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org