

Lamentations 3:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission,

Analysis

The weeping continues relentlessly: "**Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission.**" The Hebrew eini niggerah velo-tidom mi-ein hafugot (עַיִן נִגְרָה וְלֹא תָּקַמְתָּ מִן הַפְּגָוֹת) emphasizes unceasing tears. Niggerah (נִגְרָה) means to flow, pour down, be poured out. Velo-tidom (וְלֹא תָּקַמְתָּ) means "and not cease" or "without silence"—the tears don't stop.

The phrase "without any intermission" uses mi-ein hafugot (מִן הַפְּגָוֹת), literally "from there being no cessation" or "with no relief/interruption." Hafugah (הַפְּגָה) means cessation, respite, or intermission. The tears flow continuously without pause, break, or relief. This hyperbolic language conveys overwhelming, unrelenting grief.

Theologically, persistent weeping demonstrates the seriousness of sin's consequences and the depth of compassion for those suffering judgment. Unlike superficial emotion that quickly passes, biblical grief can be extended and intense. Jesus's beatitude "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4) suggests that deep mourning—over personal sin, others' lostness, or the world's brokenness—is spiritually healthy when directed toward God. The grief doesn't represent despair but rather honest acknowledgment of reality that prepares for receiving God's comfort.

Historical Context

Extended mourning was culturally normative in ancient Israel. The law prescribed seven days of intensive mourning (Genesis 50:10, 1 Samuel 31:13), with thirty days for prominent figures (Numbers 20:29, Deuteronomy 34:8). Professional mourners were hired to lead communal lamentation (Jeremiah 9:17-18, Amos 5:16). These weren't empty rituals but expressions of genuine grief supported by community.

For the exile, grief extended far beyond normal mourning periods. Psalm 137:1-2 describes ongoing weeping: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows." Ezekiel, exiled in 597 BC, continued prophesying judgment and lament until Jerusalem's fall in 586 BC—nearly eleven years of sustained grieving.

Even after return, the mourning continued. Nehemiah, learning of Jerusalem's ongoing desolation in 445 BC (nearly 140 years after the fall), sat down and wept for days, mourning and fasting (Nehemiah 1:4). This extended grief wasn't morbid dwelling on the past but appropriate response to catastrophic loss and ongoing consequences of covenant breaking that persisted for generations.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does unceasing weeping 'without intermission' teach about the appropriate duration and intensity of grief over sin's consequences?
2. How do we balance this kind of extended mourning with New Testament calls to rejoice always (Philippians 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:16)?
3. In what ways should believers today 'mourn without intermission' over the lostness of those heading toward judgment?

4. How does Jesus's promise to comfort those who mourn (Matthew 5:4) relate to extended grief like that described here?

Interlinear Text

עִין י	נֶגֶב ה	וְלֹא	תַּדְמִם ה	מִא אין	הַפְּגּוֹת:
Mine eye	trickleth down	H3808	and ceaseth	H369	not without any intermission
H5869	H5064		H1820		H2014

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 14:17 (Parallel theme): Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.

Psalms 77:2 (Parallel theme): In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.

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