

Lamentations 3:50

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Till the LORD look down, and behold from heaven.

Analysis

Hope emerges through persistent prayer: **"Till the LORD look down, and behold from heaven."** The Hebrew *ad-yashkif veyare YHWH mishamayim* (אַד-יִשְׁכִּיף וַיַּרְא יְהוָה מִשְׁמַיִם) expresses patient waiting for divine intervention. *Yashkif* (יִשְׁכִּיף, "look down") and *yare* (יַרְא, "see") together emphasize God's attention turning toward His suffering people.

The phrase "from heaven" (*mishamayim*, מִשְׁמַיִם) locates God's dwelling above, from which He observes earth. Though the cloud blocks prayer (verse 44), the speaker persists in crying out until God looks down. This demonstrates faith that God's silence is temporary, not permanent. Psalm 102:19-20 similarly declares: "For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death."

Theologically, this verse marks a crucial shift from despair toward hope. Though verses 1-47 describe comprehensive judgment, verse 50 introduces "till"—implying expectation that God will eventually act. The weeping continues but is now directed purposefully toward moving God to look and see. This anticipates verses 55-58, where God does indeed hear and draw near. It demonstrates that persistent prayer, even when seemingly unheard, is faith's proper response to discipline.

Historical Context

The plea for God to "look down from heaven" echoed Israel's deepest prayers. Moses interceded: "Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel" (Deuteronomy 26:15). Isaiah prayed: "Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory" (Isaiah 63:15). Solomon's temple dedication asked God to hear prayers "from thy dwelling place, even from heaven" (1 Kings 8:30, 39, 43, 49).

The exile seemed to negate these prayers—God appeared to have stopped looking down, stopped hearing. Psalm 74:1 cries: "O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?" Yet faithful exiles maintained hope. Daniel prayed facing Jerusalem three times daily (Daniel 6:10). The returned exiles under Ezra-Nehemiah confessed sin while appealing to God's mercy (Ezra 9:6-15, Nehemiah 9:6-37).

God did eventually look down. Isaiah 40:1-2 announces: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned." The 70-year exile ended precisely as Jeremiah prophesied (Jeremiah 29:10), demonstrating that God had not permanently turned away His gaze.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does "till the LORD look down" teach about persisting in prayer even when God seems silent or distant?
2. How does this verse's shift from describing judgment (vv. 1-47) to awaiting God's intervention (v. 50) model movement from despair to hope?

3. In what ways does Christ's resurrection demonstrate that God has looked down from heaven and intervened decisively in human history?
4. How should believers balance honest lament over current circumstances with confident expectation that God will eventually act?

Interlinear Text

עַד	יִשְׁקָךְ יְיָ	וְיִבְרָא	יְהוָה	מִשְׁמַיִם:
H5704	look down	and behold	Till the LORD	from heaven
	H8259	H7200	H3068	H8064

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 63:15 (Parallel theme): Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?

Lamentations 5:1 (References Lord): Remember, O LORD, what is come upon us: consider, and behold our reproach.