

Lamentations 3:65

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them.

Analysis

The imprecatory prayer continues: "**Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them.**" The Hebrew titten lahem megginnat-lev ta'alatekha lahem תתִן לָהֶם מֶגֶן־לֵב תַּאֲלֹתֶךָ לָהֶם requests inner anguish. Megginnat-lev מֶגֶן־לֵב means literally "shield of heart" or "covered heart"—interpreted as either hardness of heart leading to judgment, or anxiety/sorrow overwhelming the heart. Most translations favor "sorrow of heart"—inner torment matching the suffering they inflicted.

"Thy curse unto them" uses ta'alatekha lahem תַּאֲלֹתֶךָ לָהֶם. Ta'alah תַּאֲלָה means curse, oath, or imprecation. This specifically requests covenant curses fall upon the enemies. Since they opposed God's people and purposes, may they experience the judgments God pronounces on the wicked. Deuteronomy 28:15-68 details these curses; Lamentations requests they be executed.

Theologically, this prayer recognizes that God's curses are real and will be executed. Not everyone receives blessing—the unrepentant face curses (Deuteronomy 11:26-28, 30:19). The prayer isn't creating these curses but asking God to apply them. Ultimately, Christ bore the curse for believers (Galatians 3:13), but those who reject Christ remain under the curse (John 3:36, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). Imprecatory prayers acknowledge this reality and appeal for divine justice.

Historical Context

Covenant curses weren't arbitrary threats but promised consequences. Deuteronomy 27-28 lists blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.

These operated for Israel and also against nations that harmed Israel (Genesis 12:3: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee"). Lamentations 3:65 appeals to this principle.

Historical fulfillment occurred. Babylon, which destroyed Jerusalem, was itself destroyed by Persia (539 BC). Isaiah 13-14 and Jeremiah 50-51 prophesied this. Belshazzar experienced terror ("sorrow of heart") when writing appeared on the wall (Daniel 5:6). Edom, which celebrated Judah's fall, was itself obliterated (Obadiah, Malachi 1:3-4). Assyria, which destroyed the Northern Kingdom, fell to Babylon. Nations that cursed Israel received the curse.

The New Testament shows that ultimately, curses fall on all who reject Christ. Galatians 3:10 states: "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Only Christ's bearing the curse delivers us (Galatians 3:13). Those who refuse this deliverance remain under curse, which will be fully executed at final judgment (Revelation 20:11-15, 21:8).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does requesting 'sorrow of heart' for enemies teach about the internal nature of divine judgment?
2. How do covenant curses function differently than arbitrary vengeance or magical spells?
3. In what ways did Christ bear 'thy curse' (Galatians 3:13) so that believers never experience it?
4. How should knowing that unrepentant enemies will face God's curse affect both our evangelism and our confidence in justice?

Interlinear Text

לְתַתִּים	לְבָם	מִגְנָת	לְבָ	לְתַתִּים:	תִּתְּתֵנָה
Give	H1992	them sorrow	of heart	thy curse	H1992
H5414		H4044	H3820	H8381	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 6:10 (Parallel theme): Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Deuteronomy 2:30 (Parallel theme): But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day.

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