

Lamentations 3:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy.

Analysis

Imprisoned by God: "He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy" (gadar ba'adi velo etse hikbid nechoshti). The verb gadar (גָּדַר, "hedged, walled in") describes building a barrier. Job 3:23 and 19:8, Hosea 2:6 use similar imagery for being blocked by God. "I cannot get out" (lo etse) emphasizes helplessness. "He hath made my chain heavy" (hikbid nechoshti)—nechosht (נְחוֹשֶׁת) means bronze/copper chains or fetters. Heavy chains prevent movement and cause physical pain. The imagery shifts from siege (verse 5) to imprisonment—from surrounded city to bound captive. Both communicate helplessness before God's discipline. Psalm 107:10-11 describes those who 'sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; Because they rebelled against the words of God.' Bondage results from rebellion, yet God can break chains (Psalm 107:14, Acts 12:7, 16:26). The question is whether one submits to discipline or continues futile resistance.

Historical Context

Imprisonment and chains were common punishments in ancient world. Joseph was imprisoned in Egypt (Genesis 39:20). Samson was bound with bronze fetters after the Philistines captured him (Judges 16:21). Zedekiah was bound in chains and taken to Babylon (2 Kings 25:7, Jeremiah 39:7, 52:11). The bronze chains or fetters (nechosht) were durable and heavy—harder than iron to file through or break. The exile itself was a kind of imprisonment—forced to remain in Babylon, unable to return to the land. Ezekiel's fellow exiles lived in settlements like Tel-abib (Ezekiel

3:15), effectively detention camps. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were taken as captives, though they rose to high positions (Daniel 1). The experience of hedging/walling in describes how God's sovereign control can feel restrictive when we desire something contrary to His will. Jonah experienced this—trying to flee to Tarshish but unable to escape God's plan (Jonah 1:3-17).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does God 'hedging us about' serve both judgment (restricting the rebellious) and protection (keeping us from further sin)?
2. When we feel 'bound in chains' by circumstances, how do we discern whether this is divine discipline or spiritual warfare?
3. What does Psalm 107:14 promise about God's ability to break chains, and how does Christ's work free us from sin's bondage (Romans 6:18, Galatians 5:1)?

Interlinear Text

הִתְחַבֵּר	וְלֹא	אֶצֶּיֶא	הִתְחַבֵּר
He hath hedged		me about that I cannot get out	heavy
H1443	H1157 H3808	H3318	H3513

הִתְחַבֵּר:
he hath made my chain
H5178

Additional Cross-References

Job 19:8 (Parallel theme): He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths.

Job 3:23 (Parallel theme): Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?

Psalms 88:8 (Creation): Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.

Jeremiah 38:6 (Parallel theme): Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.

Jeremiah 40:4 (Parallel theme): And now, behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which were upon thine hand. If it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come; and I will look well unto thee: but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land is before thee: whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go.

Hosea 2:6 (Parallel theme): Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.

Lamentations 1:14 (Creation): The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up.