

Psalms 102:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;

Analysis

Hearing prisoners' groaning and loosing those 'appointed to death' demonstrates God's concern for the condemned and hopeless. The Hebrew 'sons of death' (benei temutah) refers to those under death sentence. This liberation imagery points to Christ's ministry of releasing captives (Luke 4:18-19) and ultimately delivering believers from sin's condemnation and death's power. The Reformed understanding of humanity's bondage to sin recognizes that all people are prisoners needing divine liberation, which comes only through Christ's atoning work.

Historical Context

This verse may allude to Israelites imprisoned and facing execution in Babylon. God's deliverance from exile would literally save lives. It also anticipates the gospel's greater deliverance from sin and death.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. In what areas of your life do you still need to experience Christ's liberating power?
2. How can you participate in God's mission of freeing those imprisoned by sin and injustice?

Interlinear Text

לִשְׁמַעַ	אֲנֹכָהּ	אֶסִּיר	לִפְתֹּחַ	בְּנֵי י
To hear	the groaning	of the prisoner	to loose	those that are appointed
H8085	H603	H615	H6605	H1121
תְּמוּתָהּ:				
to death				
H8546				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 79:11 (Parallel theme): Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die;

Psalms 146:7 (Parallel theme): Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners:

Exodus 3:7 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

Isaiah 14:17 (Parallel theme): That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

2 Kings 13:4 (Parallel theme): And Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them.

Job 24:12 (Parallel theme): Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly to them.

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