

Psalm 102:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.

Analysis

The imagery of days 'consumed like smoke' and bones 'burned as an hearth' conveys utter devastation and transience. Smoke (ashan) dissipates quickly, symbolizing life's brevity (James 4:14). The burning bones suggest intense suffering and fever. Yet this profound lament appears in Scripture to validate human suffering and point believers to eternal hope. Reformed theology affirms that God ordains suffering for sanctification (Rom 5:3-5), while Christ's sufferings guarantee our ultimate deliverance.

Historical Context

Such vivid descriptions of physical suffering were common in ancient lament literature. The burning sensation may refer to actual fever, emotional anguish, or both, reflecting the holistic Hebrew understanding of suffering.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do you maintain hope in God's goodness when experiencing prolonged suffering or loss?
2. What does Christ's voluntary suffering teach you about the redemptive purposes of affliction?

Interlinear Text

כִּי כֹל וְבָשָׂר יְהִי בָּשָׂר וְעָצְמוֹת יְהִי כְּתוּלָה
are consumed like smoke For my days and my bones as an hearth

H3588 H3615 H6227 H3117 H6106 H4168

נִתְּרָה:
are burned

H2787

Additional Cross-References

James 4:14 (Parallel theme): Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Psalms 37:20 (Parallel theme): But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

Job 30:30 (Parallel theme): My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.

Lamentations 1:13 (Parallel theme): From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaleth against them: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me desolate and faint all the day.

Psalms 31:10 (Parallel theme): For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.

