

Psalm 102:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping,

Analysis

Eating ashes like bread and drinking tears suggests that sorrow has become the psalmist's daily sustenance. Ashes (ephur) symbolize mourning and repentance throughout Scripture (Job 42:6, Jonah 3:6). This extreme imagery expresses how suffering permeates every aspect of life. Yet even in such depths, the psalmist continues addressing God, demonstrating that lament is a form of faith. Christ, the Man of Sorrows (Isa 53:3), sanctified suffering by enduring it perfectly, offering hope to all who suffer.

Historical Context

Sitting in ashes was a common mourning practice in the ancient Near East, symbolizing grief, repentance, and humility before God. The imagery of ashes as food emphasizes that mourning has become constant, not occasional.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish between healthy grief and unhealthy despair in seasons of prolonged suffering?
2. What spiritual nourishment do you need when sorrow threatens to become your only 'food'?

Interlinear Text

מִסְכָּנִים בָּרֶכֶת אֶת שְׁקָדְעִי כִּלְתָּם אֶת לְתִי
H3588 ashes like bread For I have eaten my drink with weeping and mingled
H665 H3899 H398 H8249 H1065 H4537

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 42:3 (Parallel theme): My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

Psalms 80:5 (Parallel theme): Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.

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