

Psalms 107:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being
bound in affliction and iron;

Analysis

This verse begins the second rescue scenario: prisoners in darkness. 'Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death' uses powerful imagery. 'Darkness' (choshek, חָשֶׁךְ) represents ignorance, misery, and separation from God. 'Shadow of death' (tsalmaveth, תְּסַלְמָוֶת) means deep darkness or death-shadow. 'Being bound in affliction and iron' describes imprisonment with chains. This depicts both literal captivity (exile, prison) and spiritual bondage—humanity imprisoned in sin and death (Isaiah 42:7; 61:1; Luke 4:18). We're born in darkness, bound by sin, unable to free ourselves. Only divine intervention liberates prisoners of darkness.

Historical Context

This scenario describes exiles in Babylon ('bound in affliction and iron') sitting in darkness far from home. It also echoes Egypt's bondage and any imprisonment for God's people. Spiritually, it depicts humanity's slavery to sin before regeneration. Ephesians 2:1-3 describes being 'dead in trespasses and sins.' Acts 26:18 describes conversion as turning 'from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.'

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. In what ways was humanity sitting in 'darkness and shadow of death' before Christ?
2. How does spiritual bondage to sin parallel physical imprisonment?
3. What does deliverance from darkness to light entail in Christian conversion?

Interlinear Text

יִשְׁבּוּ	חַשְׁךָ	וּצִלְמָוֶת	אֶסִּירִי	עָנִי
Such as sit	in darkness	and in the shadow of death	being bound	in affliction
H3427	H2822	H6757	H615	H6040

וּבִרְזָל:

and iron
H1270

Additional Cross-References

Luke 1:79 (Darkness): To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Isaiah 42:7 (Darkness): To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

Matthew 4:16 (Darkness): The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

Matthew 22:13 (Darkness): Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Micah 7:8 (Darkness): Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.

Psalms 105:18 (Parallel theme): Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:

Job 3:5 (Darkness): Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

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