

Psalm 107:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.

Analysis

This verse describes the severity of affliction. 'Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat' means loss of appetite—food becomes repulsive. 'And they draw near unto the gates of death' depicts life-threatening condition. 'Gates of death' (shaar maveth, שער מות) is boundary language—they're at death's threshold. This terminal condition emphasizes helplessness: they can't heal themselves, can't even eat for strength. Only divine intervention can rescue from death's gates. This prefigures Christ, who 'descended into hell' (Apostles' Creed), entering death's realm to liberate captives and destroy death's power (1 Peter 3:18-20; Hebrews 2:14-15).

Historical Context

Near-death sickness appears throughout Scripture: Hezekiah (Isaiah 38), Job (Job 2:7-8; 17:1), David (Psalm 6:4-5), Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:27). Each required God's intervention to escape death's gates. The imagery appears in Jesus' promise that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail' against the church (Matthew 16:18)—death cannot hold God's people. Resurrection guarantees passage through death's gates to life.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does approaching 'the gates of death' teach about human mortality and frailty?
2. How does Christ's victory over death ensure believers pass safely through death's gates?
3. In what ways does terminal illness reveal our dependence on God?

Interlinear Text

כָּל	אֲכָל	תִּתְהַעַב	נֶפֶשׁ	מִ	וְיָאִוָּה	וְיָאִוָּה	עַד
H3605	all manner of meat	abhorreth	Their soul	and they draw near			H5704
	H400	H8581	H5315		H5060		
שְׁעָרִים	מִתְּבָנָה						
unto the gates	of death						
H8179	H4194						

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 88:3 (Parallel theme): For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.

Psalms 9:13 (Parallel theme): Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death:

Isaiah 38:10 (Parallel theme): I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years.